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THE
ROLL OF THE
DRUM





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THE
ROLL OF THE DRUM



THE
ROLL OF THE DRUM

Houtledge's Every Boy's Annual.

Eighteenth Year of Publication.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY

**R. MOUNTENY JEPHSON, W. H. G. KINGSTON,
LIEUT. C. R. LOW,**

AND OTHER WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS.

*Full-page Plates, Coloured Illustrations, and numerous
Woodcuts.*



“Forward, Charlie!”—p. 94

THE
ROLL OF THE DRUM
AND OTHER TALES

BY
R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON
AUTHOR OF "TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON," "THE GIRL HE LEFT
BEHIND HIM," ETC., ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAYOR SECONDE, R.M.



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PREFACE.

THESE stories are essentially military. Nearly all the characters "follow the drum," and the scenes are invariably laid within sound of the drum-roll. Under the appropriate and significant title, therefore, of "THE ROLL OF THE DRUM," they appear in a collected form. As little Charlie Dare, in the first story, heard the roll of the drum in the shell, so probably will the imaginative reader hear it in nearly every page of the book. I hope that the continued roll will not become monotonous to him; that, on the contrary, he will find it, in the words of Othello, "spirit stirring."

R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON.

LONDON, 1879.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE ROLL OF THE DRUM	I
A RACE FOR A LIFE	97
A ROUGH CRUISE IN SMOOTH WATERS	127
THE ADJUTANT'S STORY	157
TAMING A TIGER	251
OUR TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOW	315

THE ROLL OF THE DRUM.

CHAPTER I.

It is many years since Sir George Dare, a Peninsular and Waterloo veteran, retired from the service. It nearly broke his heart to sever all ties with the profession which had been his glory from boyhood. There was no actual reason for his retirement except the dictates of one of the most sensitively honourable minds ever possessed by man. A true and noble patriotism guided him to take a step which was one of the most trying in his life. "The old ones should not block up the channels of promotion," he had said; "let us make way for the younger men to come on." So Sir George Dare, with an aching heart, "sent in his papers," and though still a soldier in spirit, ceased to be one in the flesh.

Making the sacrifice doubly hard to bear, he lost soon after leaving the service the wife who had been his loving, trusted, and trusting companion from early manhood—for Sir George had married young. His only son, a youngster of about twenty, and of course a soldier (the Dares were a race of soldiers), was away in India with his regiment, and the old soldier, lonely and sick at heart, lived in club chambers in London. He had inherited an old baronetcy from his father many years before, and with the title had succeeded to a substantial fortune. The two advantages

of wealth and position, combined with a simple and trusting nature, speedily made him a mark for unprincipled speculation.

In law there is a maxim that every man is innocent until he is proved guilty. In speculation the converse that every man is dishonest until you have proved him the reverse, seems to be the safer if less exalted principle to go upon. This it was not in Sir George's nature to do. He thought every man, until he had found him out to be a rogue, as guileless as himself. The result is easily foreseen. He was duped. He became a director of a bogus company—that is, a company existing on a false foundation, and before long Sir George Dare, the very soul of honour, the knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*, the gallant guileless old soldier, stood in the dock, together with the other directors, on a charge of fraud. He was acquitted of all guilt by the jury, who, not content with their bare verdict, handed into the court a written paper, signed by all of them, testifying to their sense of Sir George's untarnished honour, and the presiding judge in passing sentence on the other directors, took the opportunity of rendering, amidst applause which on this occasion was *not* suppressed, the highest tribute to Sir George's worth.

"Sir George Dare," said his Lordship, in loud and impressive tones, "you leave this court without the slightest stain on your character, which, whether on the glorious battle-field or in the quieter scenes of peaceful life has ever been a model on which I would to God the characters of all men were moulded. Were all men as you are, Sir George Dare, my occupation, like Othello's, would be gone."

The conclusion of this speech was drowned in a roar of applause, which that dingy stifling court had never heard before. The old service-worn warrior caught in the meshes of villany like a lion in the toils, had enlisted the sympathies of all from the very commencement of the proceedings. Even the old usher, who was the very pink of propriety, and had hitherto looked upon a cheer in court as an enormity of the deepest dye, now found

himself shouting out at the top of his voice, "Hear, hear! brayvo!" at the same time emphasizing his remarks with a roll of parchment on the bald head of a gentleman who was utterly unconscious of the breach of etiquette, being too absorbed at the moment in applauding with the ferrule of his umbrella on the corns of an adjacent old gentlemen, who of all in that crowded court was perhaps the only one who failed to detect the beauty and force of the learned judge's remarks.

But judge and jury and public applause could not in Sir George Dare's own estimation entirely wipe away the stains. His reputation he considered no longer spotless. It had been dragged through the mire, and there is an old saying as true as it is homely, that you cannot touch dirt and not be defiled. The iron entered deep into the soul. As Shakespeare says—

"The purest treasure mortal times afford,
Is spotless reputation; that away
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay."

Sir George felt as if he had lost this "purest treasure." Many a time in the Peninsula, at Waterloo, and in India, had he bled for his country, but no wound ever smarted like this one. It was "past all surgery," as Cassio, when he lost *his* reputation, said to that villain Iago. Like that same young soldier Cassio, *our* old soldier cried out in the bitterness of a wounded spirit—

"Reputation, reputation, reputation. Oh, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself."

Sir George Dare, however, was hard upon himself—the only living creature on this earth he could have been hard upon. No one could say a word against him. He made the noblest reparation for what on his own part had merely been a too-trusting confidence in his fellow-creatures. He devoted nearly the whole of his fortune to repaying those who had lost money in the miserable swindle to which he in his guileless innocence had lent his good name. Before he had washed his hands of the

pollution, his fortune had dwindled down into dimensions very minute compared with its former bulk.

At the very first approach of the trouble Sir George Dare had sent for his son to come to him.

"My boy, I have robbed you of your inheritance. Your old father stands before you a culprit," were almost the first words Sir George spoke to his son when they met.

Englishmen, even the most closely related to each other, are not much given to embracing, and no better specimen of a young Englishman could be found than young George Dare. Nevertheless he threw his arms round his white-headed care-worn old father's neck, and in a voice choked with emotion, said :—

"Father, dear old father, you have handed down your sword to me, and if I inherit enough of your brave spirit to wield it as gallantly as you have done, that will be enough inheritance for me."

CHAPTER II.

YOUNG Dare soon returned to rejoin his regiment in India, accompanied by a young bride, and Sir George was left in solitude. The old soldier leading a bachelor life in London chambers, felt rather like a fish out of water, which, to say the least of it, is a very unpleasant condition of existence. One day, as he was standing in the street, watching with glistening eyes a battalion of the Guards marching past—his heart always yearned to the red-coats—he felt a hearty slap on the shoulder, a roar in his ears, and then a jolly rubicund old face confronted his astonished one.

"What, George Dare!" roared the voice.

"What, Jack Paynter! old Jack Paynter!" ejaculated Sir George, in delighted tones.

The two friends had not met for years, and they wrung each

other's hands until the passers-by stared. Jack Paynter was a retired post-captain of the Royal Navy, and his intimacy with his military friend had commenced in the first Burmese war, in which a naval force co-operated with the troops in that deadly and savage campaign. At that time Sir George was a senior captain of one of the regiments constituting the land force, and Jack Paynter was first lieutenant of a frigate. No two men could have been more unlike than George Dare and Jack Paynter. The one was courteous and gentle to an extreme ; the other blunt and rough to a fault. George Dare, however, soon recognized that under that rough and unpolished exterior were many qualities of sterling gold ; and Jack Paynter had many opportunities of observing that, with all his gentleness and courteous demeanour, George Dare possessed a lion's heart. They took to each other, and their acquaintance ripened into deep friendship. The two were striking illustrations of how extremes meet. As they now stood face to face on the London pavement, which, by the way, was not exactly Jack Paynter's native heath, the two hearts warmed to each other.

"Come down with me, George, to Devonshire, and share a little crib I have there, perched upon a hill on the north-west coast," said Captain Paynter, after a few notes of each other's doings had been rapidly compared. "Come, George, and drive a little of the London fog and villany out of your system with a few fresh breezes from over the sea, the sea, the open sea."

"How long before you return, Jack?"

"Let's see," said the old sailor, as he hauled at a cable-like chain until an enormous chronometer burst into sight with quite a pop. "It would bother the London pickpockets to take *that* prize," he chuckled. "Now let's see ; it's just three o'clock ; I leave London in a hour and a half. I only arrived in the middle of the day, but I couldn't sleep a night here. I should be suffocated."

"An hour and a half, eh ? Well, I'll accompany you, Jack.

Come with me to my rooms, and I'll just get a few traps together, and then I shall be at your service. Man wants but little here below, and light marching order is my normal condition."

"Bravo, George! Bravo!" roared Jack Paynter, with a hearty bellow, that brought a policeman running round the corner under the impression that some one had been assaulted, and was crying out for assistance. "Well done! that's worthy of a sailor. I couldn't have believed that an old button and pipeclay fellow could have slipped his cable and got under way like that."

Sir George Dare was as good as his word! Within twelve hours he was under the hospitable roof of Jack Paynter's snug little cottage, and so much did he like the primitive peaceful spot, and the companionship of his old friend, that what was to have been merely a visit ended in a permanent residence.

Peacefully the years sped over the two old veteran heads. The greatest, and, with one or two exceptions, the pleasantest events in Sir George's life, were the arrivals of the Indian mail. Each one brought a letter from his son in India. One contained the joyful announcement that a little grandson was born to Sir George; and after a few years another letter, couched in heartrending terms, told him that his son was a widower. The regiment was on the point of proceeding to the Punjaub on active service, and the motherless little boy was sent home to his grandfather.

Of course little Charlie (that was the boy's name) became the old man's darling, and in Jack Paynter's large heart there also sprang up a deep affection for the child.

"He must be a sailor," said old Jack Paynter, when Charlie was little more than a baby. "He's cut out for it. He's too good for anything else. I already detect many sterling seaman-like qualities in him. He *shall* be a sailor."

With this object in view the old salt used to spin the child long yarns about the wonders of the sea.

One evening just after the candles had been lit in the snug little apartment the two old men were sitting close to the fire, with

little Charlie, aged six, between them on a small chair which they had made for him with their own hands.

"Well, Charlie, what do you see in the fire, my boy?" asked old Jack Paynter, as he noticed the child's gaze steadily fixed on the glowing coals.

"I see little soldiers running about, Uncle Jack," replied the child, who had been taught to call his old friend "Uncle."
"There, there's a piece of coal just like a soldier."

"Pooh, not a bit like a soldier," said old Jack Paynter, while Sir George sat watching the two with a quiet smile on his face.
"It's exactly like a ship, a ship in full sail."

"No, it's not a bit like a ship," said the child stoutly. "It's just like—Oh, there, its gone and tumbled in two."

"Well, and what's it like now, Charlie?"

"It's—it's like two soldiers now."

Old Jack Paynter tried another tack. From the mantel-piece he took down a large shell which he had picked up on the Coromandel coast.

"There, Charlie, my boy, hold that up to your ear, and you'll hear some pretty music."

The child did as he was bid, and there was a dead silence while the two old men sat intently watching him squatted on his little chair with the shell up to his ear.

"Well, Charlie," said Jack Paynter; whose impatient nature could brook no further delay, "don't you hear the sea whispering to you?"

"No," replied the child dreamily, and still holding the shell to his ear.

"Don't you hear the murmur of the sea, my boy?" said the old sailor.

"No, I don't hear *that*, Uncle Jack."

"Well, what *do* you hear, Charlie?" asked Sir George, for it was plain the little listener heard something.

"I hear, grandfather," said the child still listening, and w'

the blood mantling his cheeks as he spoke, "I hear the rolling of drums. Yes, it's so pretty. I hear the roll of the drum."

Sir George snatched the child off his little perch and hugged him, while old Jack Paynter seized the poker and made a furious onslaught on the fire, as being the primary cause of the mischief.

As years went on the two old men vied with each other in bringing up Charlie in the way each thought he should go. Sir George Dare's first consideration was, of course, the spiritual welfare of his charge. One example is worth a thousand sermons, it is said, and Sir George Dare's gentle life was an example constantly before the boy. He spared the rod, but he did not spoil the child; he never raised a hand to Charlie, but kept him with a gentle and loving influence in the right path. Sir George was no gloomy ascetic in religious matters, and, while he paid every attention to the after life, he also took especial care to bring the boy up to be an English gentleman. As Charlie Dare grew up, he became a proficient in every manly sport. His grandfather taught him to ride and shoot, while old Jack Paynter was his tutor in swimming and fishing. It would have been a treat to anyone with a spark of manliness in him to see the old soldier showing the lad how to take his fences on horseback. When Charlie was about fourteen, Sir George Dare was sixty-five years of age, but he sat as erect in his saddle as a smart young dragoon fresh from the riding school, and over his fences he looked part and parcel of the horse he bestrode. He had not lost that firm but easy seat which, when he was little more than a mere child, in the Peninsula, had elicited the admiration of the Duke of Wellington, himself a perfect horseman, and so great an advocate for hunting in the British army that during the Peninsular War he kept a pack of foxhounds at his own expense.

"Who's that youngster?" asked the Iron Duke one day, when out with his own pack, as he pointed to George Dare, mounted



"The more Captain Paynter hauled at the mare's mouth, the more she testified her disapproval."—p. 9

on an Andalusian horse, and sailing away over a stiff country in true Leicestershire style.

"Young Dare, of the 95th Rifles, my lord."

"Let him be attached to my staff," was the mandate.

Young Dare was not the first instance of an officer getting on the Duke's staff by sheer hard riding.

Jack Paynter rather looked down upon the art of riding as being an accomplishment peculiarly within the province of land-lubbers; but to admit, for one moment, that any one of this large and degraded class of beings could do what *he* could not was not to be thought of.

"Now, Charlie, my boy, I'll show you," said Jack Paynter one day, as his old friend took his horse over a flight of hurdles for his pupil's especial behoof. "Come down, George, and let me go aloft."

"No, no, Jack," said Sir George, with a quiet smile; "you had better not."

"Better not! what do you mean?" said Jack Paynter, warmly. "Do you think, George, that I can't do what nearly every English gentleman who stays at home at ease can do? By the living jingo, I thought you knew Jack Paynter better than that."

George Dare knew enough of his old friend to know that the best way of convincing him was to let him run his own course and convince himself.

In a few moments the wilful old sailor had clambered into the saddle and seized the reins as if they had been tiller ropes, while Charlie Dare stood by with a merry smile.

"What fun!" said Charlie, gleefully rubbing his hands.

"Steady, Jack, steady! Woa, mare, woa!" said Sir George, as a difference of opinion between horse and rider threatened dissolution of partnership at every moment. The more Captain Paynter hauled at the mare's mouth and rolled about in the saddle, the more she testified her disapproval by twisting and jumping about. At last, as if remarking to herself, "Oh, you know, horseflesh and blood can stand this no longer," she gave

a buck which transferred Captain Paynter's plump body from her back to her head.

"Steady, Jack, don't tumble overboard," said Sir George, rushing to the assistance of his friend in difficulties.

"Sheer off, George," gasped out Captain Jack Paynter, purple in the face with the exertion of hanging on. "How do you know I'm not doing this on purpose?"

Now sitting on a horse's head is a capital thing when he is down, and struggling to free himself from a weight of harness, but to do so when he is on his legs is, to say the least of it, premature. The mare herself evidently thought that the improper proceeding had better be nipped in the bud at once. Eighteen stone on her back was bad enough, but eighteen stone on her head was simply unbearable, and so, quietly dropping her neck, she deposited Captain Paynter on Mother Earth. He was not in the least hurt, and Sir George and Charlie, feeble with suppressed laughter, assisted the fallen hero to rise.

"Pshaw!" spluttered Captain Jack Paynter, "I never did think much of riding. It's only fit for a land-lubber, after all."

All Captain Paynter's efforts at improving Charlie were not such failures as this had been. Besides swimming and fishing, as already mentioned, he taught the boy to box the compass, to "shoot the sun," that is to take an observation correctly, how to splice and tie knots of every description, how to row, and how to handle a sailing-boat, and when Charlie showed what an apt scholar he was in all these matters, the old sailor would remark with a groan to his friend,

"You surely don't mean to say, George, that you're going to make a soldier of that boy?"

"Yes, I am, Jack; or rather his father is. It's his wish. The Dares have all been soldiers from father to son."

"Pshaw! you're throwing him away—throwing him away, I tell you," Captain Paynter would roar out in high dudgeon.

As his admiration of Charlie's nautical talents increased, the

efforts of the old sailor to turn the professional line of the Dares from a military into a naval direction were often repeated ; but when Charlie became too old for a naval cadetship, and the golden opportunity was gone for ever, he grew more resigned, though he would often sigh over the loss of a second Nelson which the country had sustained.

CHAPTER III.

ONE of the greatest amusements of Charlie Dare's boyhood was a flagstaff of which Captain Jack Paynter was proprietor. In connection with this wonderful flagstaff Charlie was, much to his delight, constituted a sort of signal midshipman and signalman combined. It was hardly less a delight to Captain Paynter himself. It was the toy of his old age. He would have been much insulted at its being called a toy ; and to do it justice, it was not altogether without some use. Captain Jack Paynter was always sweeping the horizon with a telescope, and tapping barometers, and generally keeping his weather eye as wide open as if he were commanding a brig in the hurricane latitudes. Consequently, he was more weatherwise than anyone in Clumberstone, and he made a beneficial use of his knowledge. He drew up a code of storm signals which he distributed amongst the fishermen, and any atmospheric commotion was predicted from the flagstaff long before the less gifted mortals in the village had detected any signs of the same. The most opinionated old fisherman in Clumberstone was not above casting his eye up at "Old Bloomin' Politeful's" flagstaff, and taking its warnings. "Old Bloomin' Politeful" was a nickname which the sailors who sailed under him had conferred upon Captain Paynter many years before, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, and it had stuck to him ever

since. Nearly everyone who sailed the seas in the British navy thirty or forty years ago knew who "Old Bloomin' Politeful" was; and when Captain Paynter settled down in the quiet little village on the Devonshire coast, the name somehow followed him there. It must be explained that this pet *sobriquet* was only used behind Captain Paynter's back. To his face, he was treated as a sort of Great Mogul.

The little village of Clumberstone looked up to Captain Paynter's flagstaff in every sense of the phrase. It was quite an institution in Clumberstone. In addition to the practical purposes it served, as above explained, it kept alive in the untutored minds of the village folk the memory of many a glorious deed of England's sons. When the morning sun would shine on the flag-staff gay with bunting, some fisherman would remark, "Halloo! Old Bloomin' Politeful's at it again. Now what battle is this here day the hanniversary of, I wonder?" Then would follow a long discussion, and conjecture would be rife in the village, until the knotty point was settled, whether the subject of commemoration was the Battle of the Nile, or Trafalgar, or Waterloo, or Salamanca, or the storming of Seringapatam.

Captain Jack Paynter did not think much of fights on land compared with those which had taken place on the sea. I am not sure whether he did not look upon Waterloo as rather a minor affair when compared with some cutting-out expedition, with a couple of pinnaces and a launch, under a lieutenant. Out of compliment, however, to his old friend and crony, all the actions in which Sir George Dare had taken part received as much honour and glory in the way of flags as Trafalgar itself, which, in Captain Paynter's opinion, was, of course, the greatest earthly event that had ever happened.

At a very early age Sir George Dare commenced Charlie's military education, and by the time the boy was twelve years of age he knew all about Vauban's "First System of Fortification," and could go through the Manual and Platoon and the Bayonet

Exercise with all the dexterity and precision of an old soldier. He also learned to play on a bugle all the different military calls. This was an accomplishment in which he took especial delight, and the hills about Clumberstone often resounded to the blast of the "Assemble" or the "Retire," or some other call.

Of course, many a yarn, naval and military, did Charlie listen to with open eyes and ears.

"Of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,"

the two old men gave him his fill. He was never tired of hearing from his grandfather's lips the story of that protracted and gallant struggle in the Peninsula, and the colour would mount into his cheeks and his eyes would flash as he listened to the recital of some deed of daring, and he would long for the time to come when he too should be able to seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth.

"No, no, Charlie," the old man would say, as he noted the boy's look, "don't long for war, my dear boy. When it comes, do your duty, and always bear in mind that 'the paths of glory lead but to the grave.'"

Sometimes Sir George's stories would be laid in more peaceful scenes, and he would talk of the time when the joint armies occupied France, and our soldiers lived peaceably and happily for more than two years in the cottages of the French peasantry. Then the scene would change again to India, to the storming of fortified pagodas and Burmese stockades; to Afghan and the Cabul pass, to tiger-shooting and pig-sticking. No wonder Charlie Dare was a soldier at heart while he was yet a child, and thus did his longing for a soldier's life grow with his growth and increase with his strength.

CHAPTER IV.

"RUN 'em up, my boy, run 'em up! That's it. Now let 'em float out to the breeze. Now belay! That's it. Now then, take your time from me. Hip, hip, hip, hooray! One more, Hooray! Though they were lobsters, by the living jingo, they did their work well! Hang it, if they had been bluejackets they couldn't have done better. Give 'em another. Now then, my lads, we'll serve out grog all round and drink to their jolly good healths."

The speaker was Captain Paynter, or, rather I should say, the roarer, for the above was roared out at the top of his voice, "Old Bloomin' Politeful" was at it again with his flagstaff. Around him on this occasion were Sir George Dare, Charlie—now a handsome manly-looking boy between fifteen and sixteen years of age—and a group of fishermen.

"What was the name of the river again, George?" asked old Jack Paynter as he mopped up the perspiration engendered by excitement and five minutes' frantic cheering.

"The Alma, Jack, the Alma," replied Sir George, with a strange mixture of enthusiasm and sadness on his furrowed face.

"Ay, the Alma. And they crossed the river, eh, under a galling fire did you say, George?"

"Yes, Jack, thank God they fought nobly for old England."

"And they stormed the heights above and thrashed the Russians, eh? Do you hear that, my lads?" said Captain Jack Paynter, turning to the group of fishermen who having cheered themselves hoarse were anxiously awaiting the next act in the performance, that of drinking their gallant countrymen's healths.

Jack Paynter did not keep them long in suspense. Rum-and-water was served out all round to them, and then after a hurried and subdued consultation amongst themselves, one of their

number, who evidently was very averse to having the greatness thrust upon him, was shoved to the front.

"Cap'en Paynter, sir, and Sir George," said the rough old fisherman. "I ain't got the gift o' the gab pertickerlerly strong. When the gab was bein' served out, I suppose the lawyers and the parsons was in front, and got a double allowance, and the fishermen and sailors, and such like was a long way behind and com'd badly off. But what me and my mates was sayin' amongst ourselves is this here. We thought that while we was drinkin' the health of them brave chaps as didn't mind goin' through danger and death for the old country, we should drink the health too of Major George Dare, your son, Sir George, what's been in the thick of it, and behaved hisself, I'll be bound, as a son of his father, and as the father of young Master Charlie there would behave hisself. I ain't quite got the name of the place where all this fightin's been goin' on——"

"The Alma, Jamieson," said Sir George.

"Ay, the Alma. It sounds a bit soft-like, too, for a place where all this shootin' and cuttin's been goin' on. But what I have to say is this here. Here's success to Major George Dare, and may he get lots o' promotion and come home a colonel; and here's success and long life to all them brave chaps as fought and was killed at the Alma."

The old fisherman waved his cap and a hoarse cheer was just about to rise to the heavens when Sir George interposed with——

"Don't forget our gallant friends who fought side by side with us."

"Bravo, Mossoo!" roared Captain Paynter. "Yes, my lads, we must give him a cheer too. Though he's an accomplished chap and speaks French just as well as you or I can speak English, he can fight too, by the living jingo, he can!"

The toast was drank enthusiastically, and then Sir George spoke a few words.

"My friends, I am very much obliged to you for thinking of my son. That he has done his duty I feel certain, and God grant

that he has been spared to do it again." (Here the old soldier's voice trembled.) "No victory can be won without the loss of many valuable lives, and though the news of this glorious victory is going through England like wildfire, and the bells are ringing, and flags flying, and men cheering, there are later particulars yet to come which will turn the rejoicing of many of us into mourning. We shall shortly receive a dreaded list which will cast a gloom over many a home in Old England—the list of the killed and wounded. Thank you all very much for the kind words you have spoken of me and mine. Before we part, let me remind you that though we naturally feel a thrill of pride in the deeds of our countrymen, yet we must remember that their stout hearts were merely instruments in the hands of God Almighty, who has seen fit to give us this victory." 50

Sir George's words had rather a quieting effect on the group, and it speedily retired to continue the discussion of the subject in the ale-house.

The flags fluttered gaily from "Old Bloomin' Politeful's" flag-staff all that day, and even the fishing smacks in the primitive little harbour beneath tried to follow its brilliant example, and dressed themselves out with any little bit of finery in the way of bunting they could get hold of. Towards the evening, Captain Jack Paynter was preparing to "haul down" at sunset. His usual assistant, Charlie, was out of the way. The boy had gone off by himself for a solitary ramble amongst the rocks. That dreaded list his grandfather had spoken of was on his mind, and he wished to be alone. Captain Jack Paynter sat smoking his pipe and keeping a sharp eye on the declining sun. To have a single rag of bunting flying one moment after the sun had gone down was an enormity the old sailor had never been guilty of. He was just knocking the ashes out of his pipe and preparing for work, when a messenger, who had been sent into the post-town, brought him a stained and soiled letter. With a gloomy foreboding, he tore open the envelope, and read as follows:—

"ALMA HEIGHTS, CRIMEA,

"September 20th, 1854.

"DEAR SIR,—I have often heard of you, and know you to be the most intimate friend Sir George Dare possesses. In fact you live together. My object in writing this is to request you to hand the inclosed letter from me to Sir George, and to beg of you to prepare him for the sad intelligence it will convey to him of the death of his son, and my dear old friend George Dare, who was shot through the heart while rallying the men this day when climbing these heights.

"Believe me, dear Sir,

"Very truly yours,

"LEONARD CARRUTHERS,

"Major, —th Regiment."

Half stunned, the old sailor sought his friend. He found him in his room, sitting at the open window, in the light and warmth of the setting sun, reading his Bible. The reader rose at the other's entrance, with a searching gaze in his eyes.

"Jack, you bring me news?"

Old Jack Paynter in silence took both George Dare's hands in his.

"Jack, bad news?"

For the first time in his life Jack Paynter dared not look a man full in the face. Still holding his friend's hands in his, he kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and a tear rolled down his weather-beaten, hard-bound face.

"Jack, my boy's killed?"

"Ay, George, shot through the heart."

Good blunt old Jack Paynter! That was his idea of breaking the news gently.

George Dare laid his hand upon the open Bible near him,

bowed his white head, and said, in a voice soft and gentle as a woman's—

“God's will be done.”

“Amen,” growled Jack Paynter, in tones none the less reverent for being gruff.

“Here's the letter, George,” said Captain Paynter, after a few moments' pause, “here's the letter from his friend, which will give you all the particulars.”

“Stay, Jack, stay, and let us read it together,” said Sir George, as the other with true delicacy of feeling, notwithstanding his rough manners, was preparing to leave the room.

“ALMA HEIGHTS,

“September 20th, 1854.

“DEAR SIR GEORGE,—With a heart heavier than I have ever known it to be, I take up a pencil to scrawl a few lines as best I can, on an old envelope. By the fortune of war you have this day lost the best of sons, England the bravest of soldiers, and I the dearest of friends. His end was a glorious one. He died wielding the sword which he prized so dearly, and which in your hands has so often flashed on many a glorious battle-field in the Peninsula and in India. Our colonel was one of the first to fall, and George assumed the command. One of our regiments, some way on our left, was being hard pressed by the Russians, and seemed on the point of falling back before an overwhelming superiority of numbers. George, seeing this, ordered our left wing to wheel a quarter circle to the left for the purpose of pouring a flanking fire into the enemy. It was while conducting this manœuvre as coolly as if he had been on parade, that George was shot. To you who are a true soldier at heart, it will be some little comfort to know that your son's prompt and cool conduct was the salvation of the regiment threatened with annihilation. I have no time for more. We have had a hard day, but, God be

praised, success has crowned our efforts. We are all, officers and men, dead beat ; but still there is thankfulness in every heart. The men are lying about me all exhausted ; but they are not silent, and the one burden of their remarks seems to be, 'What will they say in old England !' If I have not said much, dear Sir George, it is not because my heart is not full, but because duty calls me elsewhere. An attempt with fresh troops may be made under cover of the darkness to drive our exhausted little force from the position we have taken, and my regiment is for picket duty. I must now superintend the work of posting the pickets.

"Believe me, dear Sir George,

"Your most sincere friend,

"LEONARD CARRUTHERS.

"*P. S.*—We found George after the action was over. He held his sword still tightly clasped. I shall send it home to you by the first opportunity."

To say that Sir George Dare read the above with the same outward composure which had previously marked his submission to the Almighty decree, would be to say of him that he was not flesh and blood. More than once during the perusal a sob choked his utterance ; but when he had finished reading, he murmured a short prayer for strength to bear the trial, and became calmer.

Through the open window they saw Charlie returning from his stroll. The boy's usually bright face was clouded with anxious thoughts.

In a few moments he knew all. Just one passionate sob burst from him, and then Charlie compressed his lips, clenched his hands, and bore his anguish in silence. Then George Dare took him by the hand, led him away to the open window, and spoke words of comfort to the bruised young heart quivering in its first agony.

* * * * *

"Dear old grandfather," said Charlie, some hours later in the evening, "don't think I would willingly add to your grief, but my mind is made up. I am going to leave you, kindest and best of parents, in the midst of your sorrow."

"Going to leave me, Charlie? Going where?"

"To the Crimea."

The old man looked wistfully into the young face.

"To the Crimea," repeated the boy. "I am big, I am strong, and, thanks to you, I know my duty as a soldier as well as if I had been one for years. My duty is to take my father's place before the enemy. His sword will soon be here, and I shall carry it back."

* * * * *

There was much laughter in the village that evening. Regardless of the going down of the sun, "Old Bloomin' Politeful's" flags fluttered on until dark.

"Blowed if I don't think Old Bloomin' Politeful will try hisself by court-martial, and sentence hisself to four dozen for neglect of duty," observed old Jamieson, the spokesman of the day.

There was no laughing amongst the villagers the next morning, however, when they looked up at the flagstaff. Instead of the flags of all nations which had so gaily fluttered from it the previous evening, there was but one flag now—the flag of England—and that was half-mast high.

CHAPTER V.

NEVER in his life—full of self-sacrifice and gallant devotion as it had been—had Sir George Dare afforded so signal a proof of his patriotism and keen sense of duty, as when he gave his consent to Charlie Dare's plan of taking his father's place in front of the enemy.

"Have I not trained him up as a soldier?" said the old man to himself, "and shall I, when England requires the services of her sons, be the one to say him nay? No, no; he shall go. My brave boy shall have his own way."

Old Jack Paynter was terribly cut up at the prospect of losing Charlie; but he, too, looked at the question from the same patriotic point of view.

"You're right, George," he said to his old friend. "Let the boy go, while we two old hulks stay at home to hope and pray for the best."

The point being thus unanimously carried, Sir George Dare determined upon a journey to London, for the purpose of calling on the Military Secretary at the Horse Guards.

"Jack, you'll stay here, won't you, while Charlie and I are away for a few days?" asked Sir George.

"Not I, George. I'll go too. I tell you what it is, you don't go to London, except under convoy, as long as Jack Paynter is above ground."

"Well, well, Jack," replied Sir George, with a kindly smile, "come with us by all means. It was for your own sake that I proposed your remaining behind, for I know how you dislike London."

"So I do, every stick and stone in the place. But I dislike my friend falling amongst a lot of land-sharks much more. London's

their favourite cruising ground, and a simple fellow like you, George, has no chance amongst them unless he has a knowing old shot like me to steer him clear of them."

"Come, come, Jack, a burnt child dreads the fire ; and I'm not likely to go burning my fingers in that way again, even if I had the means. Besides, you must not have such an idea, Jack, as that the population of London is composed mainly of knaves. No, no, there are as many good men and true in it as there are bad men."

"Not a bit of it, George. It's impossible. A man who, day after day, year after year, breathes fog and smoke instead of the pure air of heaven, and sees nothing but bricks and mortar instead of the sea and trees and streams, must become a scoundrel. I tell you what it is, if I lived in London for a whole year and met you at the end of it, I'd pick your pocket, and forge your signature to a bank cheque."

"Jack, Jack," said Sir George, with a kind smile, "you're incorrigible."

"Yes I would, George. I'd pick your pocket, forge your signature, and cut your throat."

Sir George shook his head and laughed good humouredly.

"From ear to ear," said old Jack Paynter, quite fiercely.

"Well, well, Jack, we must get our business over as soon as possible, and before this deterioration of your nature sets in."

"I don't mean to say that I'm naturally of a bloodthirsty disposition, George ; but a year of London would turn me from the gentle lamb that I am into a ravening wolf. Why *you*, George, if you—No," said Jack Paynter, in quite a different tone as he turned on his heel and walked away, "I don't believe anything could make *him* bad. He'd come unscathed out of the most fiery furnace of temptation."

Sir George and Jack Paynter were men of action, and Charlie Dare was eager for the fray. Consequently, the trip to London followed within a day or two of its projection. They left Clum-

berstone at early dawn, and travelled as far as Exeter by coach. At Exeter the iron horse replaced the four of flesh and blood, and whirled our travellers along to their destination. It was late in the evening when they arrived in London. Amongst the numerous improvements that have been made in our metropolis during the last thirty years, perhaps the most striking are the magnificent hotels that have sprung up in different parts. At the time our party visited London there were no such travellers' palaces as the Langham, the Grosvenor, and Charing Cross Hotels, and they took up their quarters at a quiet hotel off the Strand, much frequented by officers of both services at that time. After dinner they had a walk through the crowded streets, just to give Charlie an idea of London before turning in to bed. Old Jack Paynter insisted on conducting their progress through the thoroughfares, as if they were marching through an enemy's country, and walked behind the other two as a sort of rear-guard to protect the main body from being plundered. After their fatiguing journey of the day they soon had enough of the London streets. On their return to the hotel, Jack Paynter insisted on grog all round before turning in.

"Oh, George, George," said Jack Paynter, "I was quite right in convoying you up to town. If I hadn't been with you this evening you'd have been robbed half-a-dozen times over. Upon my word, the confiding simple manner in which you'd look into a shop window with your handkerchief hanging out of your pocket convinces me that you're not to be trusted in London by yourself. And you too, Charlie, you're just as bad. I'll tell you what it is, neither of you stir out without me as an escort. Blessed if ever I saw such a couple of innocents! If I hadn't been ——"

Captain Jack Paynter, who for the last few moments had been feeling for his handkerchief, here betrayed symptoms of anxiety. He finished off his grog at one gulp (nothing ever put him off to the extent of forgetting his grog) and hurriedly wished his friends "good night."

"No, no, Uncle Jack," said Charlie, jumping up with a ringing laugh, and placing his back against the door. "Before you go I want you to give me a little present."

"What do you mean, you young rascal?"

"Would you mind giving me your handkerchief as a little keepsake before you go to bed?" said Charlie, with a sly glance at Sir George.

"I'll give you a little rope's end as a keepsake, if you don't look out. Stand aside, sir, and let your superior officer pass. Here's mutiny on the high seas. I'll call out the marines and have you shot."

Charlie shook his head and stood to his post.

"Come, Jack," said Sir George, rising up and joining Charlie in doing sentry over the door. "Out with the handkerchief, old fellow."

Jack Paynter was at bay. He stood looking from one to the other for a few moments, and then blurted out—"If you want a handkerchief, George, you'd better use your own, for mine's gone."

A merry laugh burst from Charlie.

"Ah, Jack," said Sir George, as he patted his old friend on the shoulder, "the next time we go out we must put you between the 'couple of innocents' to be taken care of. By the way, Jack, your purse is all right, I hope?"

"No, no, I'm not quite such a greenhorn as to let them have that, George," said Jack Paynter thrusting his hand into his pocket. "Here it is all.—By the living Jingo, though, it feels precious light!"

In another moment Captain Jack Paynter's purse was held up for inspection—empty. Seeing that it was nothing more costly than a little canvas bag, the thief had very considerably put it back after having abstracted its contents. This time Charlie did not laugh. It was beyond a laughing matter. Poor old Jack Paynter had been so intent upon watching over his friends and impressing upon them the necessity of keeping a sharp look out,

that he had lost sight of himself and had fallen an easy victim to some Artful Dodger.

“Old Bloomin’ Politeful” laid himself down to rest that night with, if possible, a lower opinion than ever of our busy metropolis.

CHAPTER VI.

IN his own quaint and forcible way, Captain Paynter said, the reader may recollect, that one year in London would turn him into a villain. Had one night been sufficient to effect the same metamorphosis in Sir George Dare’s character? It really looked as if it had been. At an early hour the following morning he was busy at bribery and deceit. The first move in the deep game he was playing was a visit to his bankers, Messrs. Cox and Co., at Charing Cross. From them he drew the sum of twenty pounds in sovereigns, one of which he changed into shillings, one of which he changed into pence. He then sought a policeman to whom he confided a deep scheme together with eighteen sovereigns, nine shillings, and tenpence—strange coincidence, the exact sum stolen from Captain Paynter the previous evening! He further bestowed upon the policeman the sum of one sovereign as the price of his services in the base intrigue. Having thus set the machinery of his plot in motion Sir George Dare turned to the important business of the day which was nothing more nor less than a visit with Charlie to the Military Secretary at the Horse Guards. Telling Charlie to wait outside until he was called in, Sir George Dare entered the dingy door under the archway through whose begrimed portals so many aspirants to military renown had hopefully passed. The Military Secretary had been a brother officer of Sir George Dare’s and many a hard day’s fight and many a toiling march, many a scant ration they

had shared together in the Peninsula. Consequently, in place of the usual official reserve which characterised the Military Secretary's demeanour towards most of his visitors there was a warm welcome and a hearty shake of the hand.

"What, George Dare! This is an unexpected pleasure! I was sorry for you, George, old friend, when I heard of your loss at the Alma. But it was a glorious death, a glorious death. Now, what can I do for you?"

"I want a commission for my boy's boy. He has made up his mind to take his father's place before the enemy."

"A regular chip of the old block, I should think he must be from that. But he's not old enough, surely?"

"Well, he's under age certainly, but there isn't a finer or smarter youngster serving Her Majesty now than he is. I've taught him almost as much of a soldier's duty as I know myself, and he's as fit for the work as any subaltern in the service."

"How old is he?" asked the Military Secretary.

"Close on sixteen."

"Phew! that's rather too young, George. They don't send such chickens to fight as they used to in our time."

"Wait until you see him. He's outside."

"Send for him, by all means. I should like to see him. Most of the visitors to my official den are service-worn old chaps with grievances, and it will be positively refreshing to see a youngster bright with hope and enthusiasm."

A messenger was at once despatched, and in a few minutes Charlie Dare entered the room. With not a little curiosity did Sir George watch the boy's demeanour under what were rather trying circumstances. There are certain occasions when it is very hard for a youngster to be manly and yet not appear pert, or as a boy would say "cheeky," and to be respectful in his manner towards his elders, and not seem shy or awkward. Charlie, however, acquitted himself well. He was respectful, but in a frank, manly way, and Sir George felt proud of the boy. The Military

Secretary was evidently at once prepossessed, as he shook Charlie's hand quite affectionately.

"Your grandfather and I were old chums, and it does my heart good to see in you the very *fac simile* of what he used to be," said the Secretary, as he held Charlie's hand in his and looked admiringly at him from head to toe. "Why, George," he added, turning round and speaking with a glistening eye, "the sight of the youngster carries me back to the days of auld lang syne, when we fought and starved together. Gad! he makes me feel a youngster again. So you want to go and fight, as your grandfather did before you, eh?"

"I have been brought up to be a soldier," replied Charlie, "and now, when there is plenty of work for soldiers going on, is the time to become one, sir."

"And so you shall, my brave boy. George, I'll manage it. We'll get over the little difficulty of age."

The interview lasted some time longer, and at its conclusion Charlie Dare departed with the promise given him that he would shortly be gazetted to the regiment in which his father had met his death, but that he must first pass a preliminary examination, which in those days was a mere form.

"Well, Charlie, so far, that has been satisfactory," said Sir George, as the two walked arm-in-arm to their hotel.

"Yes, the only hitch in our visit as yet," said Charlie, "is poor old Uncle Jack's loss last night."

"Well, well, there's no knowing; he may recover his money after all."

"Not much fear of that, I'm afraid," said Charlie.

"Don't be too sure. The London police are very sharp."

It really seemed as if Sir George Dare were gifted with wondrous foresight, for on arriving at their hotel they were met by Captain Jack Paynter in boisterous spirits.

"Well, George, what do you think? I've got my money back again, every blessed penny of it."

"Dear me, how extraordinary!" said that arch impostor, Sir George Dare. "How did you manage it, Jack?"

Here, with high glee, Captain Jack Paynter related a long story of how a policeman had seen the robbery perpetrated, had given chase, captured the thief, recovered the booty, and traced the rightful owner. Finally, Captain Paynter wound up with a hearty compliment to the Metropolitan police.

It did Sir George Dare good to watch the happy result of his deep laid plot. Poor "Old Bloomin' Politeful" was not overburdened with the riches of this world: but no power on earth would have induced him to accept, from even his old friend, an equivalent for his loss, and Sir George Dare had stooped to a pious fraud.

The days of the Crimea were not the days of competitive examinations, and the following day, by the interest of the Military Secretary, Charlie Dare was allowed to present himself before the board of examiners. A couple of hours was quite sufficient for these gentlemen, and Charlie was pronounced intellectually and physically fit food for powder.

Some days were spent in ordering an outfit, and then the party returned to the quiet little haven of rest at Clumberstone.

* * * * *

The Military Secretary was as good as his word; within a fortnight of the interview Charlie Dare's name appeared in the *Gazette*. With what rapture a youngster just starting in a military career reads the magic announcement that he is at last enrolled as one of the defenders of his country! What visions of glory, of battles, of breaches stormed, of forlorn hopes, of Field Marshal's batons does the short formal little sentence conjure up! No subsequent appearance of his name in the *Gazette*, no matter how high the rank and honour conferred upon him, will ever look so big in his eyes as the first and lowliest one. I daresay Wellington did not think half as much of the *Gazette* which raised him to the dignity of a Duke of the United Kingdom as he did of the simple

announcement, when he first saw it—"Arthur Wellesley, to be ensign in the 73rd Regiment of Foot."

Considerably dimming Charlie Dare's bright visions of glory was the mention, under melancholy circumstances, of a loved name in the same *Gazette* :—

"—th Regiment : Charles Dare, Gent., to be Ensign in succession to Major George Dare, killed in action."

Bitterly did Sir George's heart ache as he read the above. His heart ached for what had been and for what might be. How soon might not the name of Dare appear in another *Gazette* to make way for some other young aspirant ? The old man, however, kept his thoughts and fears to himself, and there was nothing in his manner to chill the ardour of the young soldier. Captain Jack Paynter honoured the occasion by dressing the flagstaff with a gallant show of bunting, and the villagers soon learned with a mixture of sorrow and pride, that young Mister Charlie was a red-coat, and was going to the wars.

A few days after this, the sword which Major Carruthers had taken from his friend's death-grasp, and which he promised to send home, arrived.

"There, Charlie," said Sir George, in a voice broken with emotion, "I place it in your hand with a thorough confidence that you will be as true as its steel. But, oh ! Charlie, Charlie, my boy, my boy, God grant that while you wield it as gallantly as, you may wield it more fortunately than, your poor father."

CHAPTER VII.

A FORTNIGHT has elapsed since the close of the last chapter—an eventful fortnight in Charlie Dare's life. He has joined the depôt of his regiment, and within a week of joining, he has, through the interest of his friend, the Military Secretary, and his own efficiency, been sent out with a draft which was then leaving. Dressed in the gay trappings of a soldier, gorgeous with gold lace and scarlet cloth, Charlie Dare stands on the deck of Her Majesty's ship *Samson*, which has been fitted up as a transport, and is at present engaged in conveying drafts to fill up the gaps which pestilence and battle have made in the ranks of our gallant little army in the Crimea. The shores of dear Old England are still in sight, but they are fast fading from his gaze. The cheers of men, the sobs of women, the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Cheer, boys, cheer," are still ringing in his ears. Charlie Dare's young heart is as stout as ever, but it is wrung with many an aching thought of home, sweet home. His old grandfather's face, as he last saw it a couple of hours ago on the jetty at Portsmouth, the dim eyes, the quivering lips, on which a blessing and a prayer are trembling, is still before him; and there, beside that loved form, Charlie, in his mind's eye, still sees old Jack Paynter, the tears coursing down his rough weather-beaten cheeks—for the old sailor loved the boy as much as if he had been his own son. Charlie's young eyes were able to see the two old fellows long after he had been lost to their gaze, and the last he saw of them was hand in hand; and with a bitter pang he recollects how he then noticed that his grandfather's form did not look as erect as usual—that it looked crushed and broken. The young soldier's heart is bursting; but were he able, by a mere effort of his will,

to turn the ship on which he stands homeward again, his gallant spirit would cry out, "No! a thousand times, no!"

Enough of Charlie Dare's meditations; they were soon disturbed by an orderly-corporal, who came up with a salute, and handed him a book.

"Evening orders, sir, just issued," said the non-commissioned officer.

Charlie took the order-book, and attentively read over the order. Amongst other things, he saw that he and two other sub-alterns were detailed for watch that night.

On board a ship conveying soldiers, there is always at night a military officer on watch as well as a naval one, and the duration of each officer's watch is the same—four hours.

Charlie was on first, from eight o'clock to twelve, and his duty consisted in going round the troop-deck every hour, visiting the sentries on their different posts, and then reporting "all correct," or otherwise, to the naval officer on watch.

The greatest vigilance should be—and, to do our officers justice, invariably is—exercised in the discharge of this duty, the object of which is not so much the maintenance of good order—though, of course, that is rigidly enforced—as the prevention of that most dreaded of calamities at sea, a fire. The cry of "fire" on land is a startling one, but at sea it makes the stoutest heart quail. The soldier dearly loves his "pipe o' baccy," and one thoughtless man surreptitiously trying to indulge his craving—for such it becomes with many—may bring destruction on the whole ship.

Seeing that Charlie was brought up as a soldier at the feet of George Dare, it is almost needless to add that he performed his duty with the strictest attention. Between his rounds there was nothing for him to do but to sit or pace about on deck. Until about ten o'clock a few officers remained on deck, but after that they turned in, and Charlie was left alone to his thoughts and the performance of his duty. As he trod the lonely deck in the

darkness of the night, his spirit wandered away to the quiet little home at Clumberstone, and he wondered whether his grandfather and old Jack Paynter had reached there yet. Then he pictured them to himself sitting down together lonely and sad; and it is in no way impugning Charlie's manliness to add that for a few moments his eyes were dim, and a fervent prayer filled his heart that he might return in safety once more to enjoy and cheer that peaceful little home.

Towards the middle of Charlie's watch, the wind freshened into a stiff breeze, with a nasty lumpy sea, through which the vessel laboured heavily, and the poor red-coats, so smart and trim on shore, were nearly all, officers and men, on their beam-ends with sea-sickness. Thanks to old Jack Paynter, Charlie had long ago conquered this weakness in many a cruise off the Devonshire coast, and the veriest old salt on board was not less inconvenienced by the motion than he was. By twelve o'clock, the time when Charlie's duty should have terminated, the stiff breeze had become a gale, and with every plunge she made the ship groaned, and so did the red-coats. Young Ensign Simpkin was Charlie's relief, and Charlie gave him half-an-hour's grace; but no Simpkin turned up.

"Here; where's the corporal of the military watch?" said Charlie, walking forward.

A limp figure in a military great-coat bending over the side of the ship, feebly murmured, "Here, sir;" and, all honour to British discipline, the limp figure saluted, though it kept its face turned from its officer, which, under the circumstances, was about the most polite thing it could have done.

Charlie waited until the paroxysm was over, and, then, in the feeble rays of a ship's lantern, the man turned a face, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast" of sea-sickness on Charlie, and made a limp attempt to stand at attention.

"You'll soon be better," said Charlie, kindly.

"Thank you, sir; I hope so, sir," said the corporal, in a tone

of voice which implied that he might very easily be that, and still not happy.

"Go downstairs—ahem, I mean down below" ("Dear me," thought Charlie, "what would dear old Uncle Jack think of me")—"go down below, and tell Mr. Simpkin, with my compliments, that I'm waiting to be relieved off watch."

"Yes sir," said the corporal, and with a limp and unsteady gait, so different from his bearing on shore, he betook himself off to obey the mandate. It was fully ten minutes before he reappeared.

"If you please, sir, I can make nothing of Mr. Simpkin. He's awfully bad, sir, and I was suddenly taken worse myself when I was in his cabin, and had to join him. No disrespect was meant, sir, I hope you'll tell Mr. Simpkin as soon as he's well enough to understand anything. He's not fit for duty at present, sir."

"What shall I do?" thought Charlie. "I'd willingly take Simpkin's watch for him, but, of course, I can't do so without the adjutant's sanction; and I don't like to wake him up, poor fellow, for he's been at work day and night for the last two days. I'll go down and see Simpkin myself. If he once got up here, the fresh air might do him good."

After acquainting the naval officer on watch that he was going down below to call up his relief, Charlie repaired to Simpkin's cabin.

"I say, Simpkin, come along, it's your watch."

A sound familiar, horribly familiar, to any one who has crossed the Channel on a rough night, and on which there is no need for further expatiation, was Charlie's only answer.

"What good could I be on watch?" asked Ensign Simpkin, a few moments after, as he turned a lack-lustre eye and a woe-begone countenance of pea-green hue on Charlie. "What good's there in having *any* watch? I'm sure there's no fear of any of the men wanting a pipe. Oh, gracious!"

The very mention of a pipe, though Simpkin on shore was an inveterate smoker, was enough to set him off again.

"Oh dear!" he gasped in the intervals of his struggle, "I thought drill on shore was bad enough, with its everlasting Right-half turn, Left-half turn, Right-about turn; but we ought to have a new word of command at sea, and it ought to be Inside-out turn. Oh!"

And here the unhappy youth proceeded to execute this last evolution with a success which carried all before it.

"Thank goodness," murmured Simpkin in feeble accents, "we haven't got to fight at sea. Fight! Hang it, I'd surrender at the present moment to the smallest drummer in the Russian army. I'd lay down my arms to a broomstick with a Russian helmet on the top."

"Well, to tell you the truth, I don't think you'd be the slightest use on watch. In fact, you couldn't go round between decks under the hammocks. It would be a physical impossibility. I'll go and see the adjutant, and ask him to let me take your watch for you."

Simpkin turned a grateful but fishy orb on Charlie as the latter left the cabin.

"Simpkin's too ill to go on watch," said Charlie to the adjutant, after he had aroused that officer from his well-earned slumbers. "He's as sea-sick as ever he can be."

"Oh; but he can't get an overslaugh, you know, for sea-sickness," said the stern officer. "That's out of the question. All the youngsters except yourself are down. He'll have to do the duty, and make the best of it."

"But he's really too bad," said Charlie. "He'll be worse than useless. I don't believe he could stand up straight for a minute together, if you were to offer him his lieutenantancy on the spot for doing it."

"Well, the next for duty must go on, that's all. Mainwaring comes next. Turn him out, and warn him from me."

"But he's bad too. In fact, as you say, all the youngsters but myself are down."

"Yes," said the adjutant ; "you see it's unfortunate our having such a bad first night of it."

"I'm not a bit tired," said Charlie ; "and if you'll let me take the next two watches, I'll undertake that the duty is performed all correctly."

"But, my dear boy, you'll be tired out."

"No, I shan't ; and even if I am, I shall be more able to do the duty than if I were half-dead with sea-sickness, like Simpkin and the other fellows."

"Well, it certainly would be the best way out of the difficulty, and one volunteer is worth a dozen pressed men."

"I should think they *would* be pressed men. Poor Simpkin looks as if he had been through a mangle," said Charlie.

"Well, will you really take the duties, my dear fellow ?" said the adjutant, laughing.

"Yes, certainly ; that's exactly what I have come to tell you."

"By Jove !" said the adjutant, as he prepared to resume his slumbers, which, by the way, were taken in semi-harness, ready for any emergency, "when you woke me I felt rather inclined to curse, but now my cursing is turned into blessing. Dare, you're a brick ! Good-night."

"Good-night."

"It's all right, Simpkin," said Charlie, as he looked into Simpkin's cabin. "The adjutant says I can take your watch."

The wretched Simpkin merely replied in a manner which spoke volumes.

"Good-night. I hope you'll soon be better," said Charlie.

Simpkin only responded with a groan. All sublunary matters had ceased to be of the least importance to him.

On regaining the deck, Charlie's first act was to acquaint the naval officer of the change of duties, as the naval officer is generally provided with the name of the military officer of the watch.

"Oh, all right, I see. You're not Ensign Simpkin, then, eh ?"

"No ; my name's Dare."

"How is it you've got your sea-legs already, particularly such a dirty night as this has turned out? You look as fresh as the first-lieutenant's paint."

Charlie explained that he had tumbled about in many a rough sea off the Bristol Channel.

"Well," said the officer, as Charlie was leaving to go his rounds, "come and have a bowl of ship's cocoa with me about four o'clock, just before I'm relieved. They make it then for the blue-jackets, and it's a capital thing to freshen you up, and keep the morning air out."

Charlie readily accepted the invitation, and in a few minutes afterwards was diving down between decks.

Those who have never performed the duty of going round a troop-deck at night-time, can have no conception of the discomfort and difficulty of the proceeding. To say the least of it, it is a most break-back operation. During the day you can walk along, if you are not very tall, as a human being should walk—erect on two legs; but at night, when the hammocks are slung, you have to creep under them, doubled up into half your natural altitude, and even then it is impossible to avoid collision now and then with some sleeper whose hammock is slung a little lower than it should be. Upon which the said sleeper, ignorant of the rank of the disturber of his dreams, generally lets fly a term of endearment. Sometimes from a hammock there protrudes a leg, whose proprietor is in the throes of nightmare, and this combination of circumstances may lead to disagreeable results. Altogether, there are pleasanter operations than going round the troop-deck of a transport at night-time; and when to the above-mentioned disagreeables are added, as was in Charlie Dare's case, a ship pitching and rolling heavily, and some hundreds of men in the miseries of sea-sickness, the reader may imagine that our hero's first experience of one of the phases of a soldier's life was a rough one. Most rigidly, however, did Charlie adhere to the order of going round the troop-deck every hour. At four o'clock

he joined the naval officer on watch in a friendly bowl of ship's cocoa, which was brought up steaming hot from the galley, and which Charlie pronounced to be excellent. At seven o'clock he was relieved off watch by a very limp and pale young officer, who was the subaltern of the day. Not sorry was Charlie to lay his aching back at full length in his berth for an hour before having his bath, and dressing for breakfast.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT breakfast Charlie was the only youngster who put in an appearance, and the business-like way in which he did justice to the meal awakened the envy of some, and the admiration of others.

The adjutant took an early opportunity of informing the officer commanding the troops on board, a grizzled old colonel, how Charlie had taken the three successive watches throughout the night. In a few moments an orderly informed Charlie, with the adjutant's compliments, that the commanding officer wished to see him at the orderly-room.

The "orderly-room" was merely a portion of the troop-deck set apart for the transaction of military business, and thither Charlie at once repaired.

"So you took all the watches last night, Dare, eh?" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir," said Charlie, quite happily, and looking as fresh as paint, notwithstanding his nocturnal exertions.

"And went round the troop-deck, and visited the sentries every hour?" said the colonel, fixing a searching eye on Charlie.

"Yes, sir."

"And made you report each time to the naval officer of the watch?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you find the sentries alert on their posts?"

"Not all, sir."

"Why not, sir?"

"Some were sea-sick, sir."

"That will do."

"Thank you, sir." And Charlie touched his forage cap and retired.

"Humph," grunted the old colonel, as he watched the retreating form for a moment or two, "if they don't shoot him, he'll do something out there. But they *will* shoot him. He's just the youngster—I know the cut of the sort well—that's sure to get shot in the very first action he goes into."

Before noon the wind went down, and the sea quickly subsided; the sun shone out brightly, and cheered all on board. The red-coats perked up quite gaily, and began to make anxious inquiries about the dinner hour, which was a capital sign. The non-commissioned officers and men dined at twelve o'clock, and the officers at three. At the latter dinner most of the youngsters quite recovered their usual spirits.

"Dare," said Simpkin, who sat opposite to Charlie, "upon my word it was awfully good of you to take my watch last night."

"And mine too," said the young ensign, who was next on the roster to Simpkin.

"Here's your good health, Dare," said Simpkin, drinking to Charlie, in a bumper of fiery ship's port.

"I must do the same," said the other. "Here's to you, Dare."

Charlie held his glass up, and nodded brightly. "You mustn't thank me though. The thanks are due to a dear old friend who turned me into a sort of amphibious animal when I was a child."

"Well, we'll drink to *his* health," said Simpkin, who was quite festive after his recent indisposition. "What's his name?"

"Captain Paynter," replied Charlie, laughing heartily, as he contrasted the Simpkin opposite to him with the Simpkin of the previous night. "If it had not been for him, I should have been as sea-sick as you were, Simpkin, and, of course, couldn't have done your duty for you."

"Well, here's to Captain Paynter," said Simpkin, elevating his glass, and tossing off another bumper of "fine old fruity;"

"For he's a jolly good fellow,
For her he's a jol——"

"Mr. Simpkin," said one of the senior captains, sitting some way down the table, "if you can't behave yourself at the table, you'll have to leave it, sir."

Simpkin made no reply, but tried to look as if he were very much amused, an effort which was hardly successful, and which failed to take in anyone.

"Did you say your old friend's name was Paynter?" asked the first lieutenant, who sat near, and had been listening with an amused countenance to the youngsters' conversation.

"Yes," said Charlie.

"I wonder if it can be 'Old Bloomin' Politeful,'" said the first lieutenant.

"Yes, yes, it is," said Charlie, with a sort of feeling that he would like to jump over the table, and wring the first lieutenant's hand. "Why, do you know him?"

"Well, nearly everyone of my standing in the navy recollects 'Old Bloomin' Politeful,' as the men christened him. There were more yarns told about him than about anyone else in the service. Everyone in the navy knew him. He was a rough and tough old customer, and as stubborn as a mule; but he was a splendid old sailor."

During the remainder of the dinner, Charlie and the first lieu-

tenant discussed nothing but their mutual old friend ; and when, amongst other anecdotes regarding him, Charlie related how the old fellow would insist on giving him a riding lesson, and how he did it, the first lieutenant roared again, and said, "Wasn't that just like 'Old Bloomin' Politeful?'"

After the dinner, the time was passed in smoking, reading, pacing the deck, and talking until tea-time. The evening was a charming contrast to the preceding one. The sea was smooth, the sky was clear and moonlit, and the air was soft and balmy. Nearly all the officers sat throughout the evening on deck. For some time they occupied the time in spinning yarns in true nautical fashion, the officers of the ship fraternising in the most friendly way with their red-coated brethren.

Though one of the strictest disciplinarians afloat, the captain had a kind heart, and knew well the time when to loosen or tighten the rein.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, as he passed a little knot of young subalterns, and perhaps thought that before many weeks were over many a young heart beating high with youthful aspiration might be stilled for ever, "well, gentlemen, isn't there a songster amongst you ? It isn't man-o'-war fashion, but if you like to have a song or two, I've no objection. Pass the word there for'ard to the officer on watch, that the men may sing on the fo'c'stle. Poor fellows," soliloquised the captain, "they've some tough work before them, and will be singing to a different tune before long."

The permission was readily taken advantage of, both fore and aft, and in a few moments Simpkin was heard proclaiming at the top of a rather reedy voice, that "a life on the ocean wave, and a home on the rolling deep," was a state of existence in which he gloried. And then, when he was encored, he gave them "A Pirate's life for me," with a bloodthirstiness in his tones which should have raised a fearful dread in the captain's mind that he might wake the next morning to find the black flag flying from the peak, and to be told that the great Simpkin had taken the

ship during the night, and was off on a gay buccaneering expedition. Strange to say, however, the captain did not even change colour, and wore a calm smile on his face, which showed what a cool daring fellow he was.

At half-past ten o'clock the *al fresco* concert came to an end, grog was inbibed below, and then all turned in.

Even if there were space to do so, it would be "weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable," to linger over each day of the voyage. Reader, you have had one fine day at sea—*ab uno disce omnes*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE first lieutenant took immensely to Charlie; and a first lieutenant is by no means a bad friend to have on board ship. This naval officer, however, was not singular in his fancy. Every one who came in contact with him took to Charlie Dare; and old Sir George's heart would have swelled with pardonable pride could he have heard the golden opinions his boy managed to win on all sides.

The ship touched at Gibraltar for fresh provisions and coals, which afforded Charlie and such of his brethren-in-arms who were not on duty an opportunity of visiting the far-famed Rock. Here they were most hospitably entertained at lunch by the officers of a militia regiment, who were ever on the look-out to *fête* their luckier brethren passing through on their way to the front. After lunch there was just time for a climb up to the signal station, and a scamper round the galleries, and then once more on board and away.

Two days after leaving Gibraltar, the ship, under sail and steam, was running before a stiff breeze, with a long rolling sea surging after her. The officers had not long come up from dinner, and

were pacing the deck, or gathered together into little groups, carelessly chatting. Charlie happened to be standing near the colonel, when suddenly the thrilling cry of "Man overboard!" rang through the ship.

In one moment every sound on board the ship was stilled, except the throb of her engines and the necessary words of command on such an occasion, the first of which had been, "Cut away the life-buoy!"

Just for a few seconds, from where he stood, Charlie caught sight of an imploring upturned face in the sea as the ship swept past it.

"May I leave the ship, sir," asked Charlie, as he touched his cap, and turned round to the commanding officer.

Colonel Cumbermere (that was his name) did not know what the youngster meant, but before he had had much time to think about it, Charlie's cap and coat were at his feet, and Charlie himself was gallantly breasting the waves.

It is astonishing how quickly, in a well-disciplined man-of-war, a boat is manned and lowered; but it is also astonishing how quickly a ship with much way on her sweeps on, leaving an object behind. Before the boat was lowered, the man at the mast-head was the only one on board who could see those two little specks which meant two human lives in deadly peril by sea.

"Masthead, there!" shouted the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Can you see both of them?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Keep your eye on 'em, then."

"Aye, aye, sir."

To those on deck even the boat was soon lost to view, except for a moment now and again as it rose in the distance on the crest of some exceptionally high wave.

The suspense on board was, of course, intense. It soon went round the ship that the man who had fallen overboard was a

young sailor lad who, it was said, could not swim, and who had been skylarking.

"Bill," said one blue-jacket to another, "who went in after him?—some one from the quarter-deck, warn't it?"

"Aye. Bless'd if they don't say it was a young solger officer."

"A young solger officer!"

"Aye, that there one—he ain't more'n a boy—that's al'ays got a merry face and a kind word for a chap for'ard, and goes aloft as well as you or me."

"I know him. Blowed if he ain't the likeliest young chap I ever see in a red coat; aye, or in a blue one either, for the matter o' that."

The interest concerning Charlie's fate was of course still more keen on the quarter-deck, where he was better known.

"Ah," murmured Colonel Cumbermere, "I said, almost the first time I saw that youngster, that he would be shot in the first action he went into. But I was wrong; he'll be drowned."

"Masthead, there!" again shouted the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Still see them?"

"Well, there's a bit o' haze over the water, sir, and I can't azactly——"

"Hamilton!" said the captain, in sharp tones.

"Aye, aye, sir," said a rosy-cheeked little midshipman, with a glittering pair of eyes, which had the credit of being the sharpest in the ship, and which had conferred upon their owner the honour of being signal-midshipman.

"Up with you, sir."

The boy needed no second bidding. He sprang into the shrouds, and in a few moments he was perched up aloft, eagerly scanning the sea in the direction the objects had last been seen in.

"Can you make them out?" shouted the captain.

"Not yet, sir. Yes, yes, I can, sir. I can just see them."

"What's the cutter doing?"

"She must have seen them, sir, and is steering a right course for them."

In a minute or two more the midshipman was again hailed, and this time the reply was, "The cutter's nearly up to them." Then, after a pause, during which every eye was fixed upon this chubby-cheeked cherub aloft, came the welcome intelligence—"The cutter's taken them both in, sir."

A murmur of relief rose from the deck, and "Thank God!" burst from many a heart.

The ship was now steered towards the cutter; the surgeon made his preparations in the "sick bay;" blankets were warmed, the ladder was let down, and everything was prepared for the reception of the rescued and the rescuer. In a short time the cutter, with her precious freight snatched from a watery grave, was alongside. The sailor lad, insensible, but not lifeless, was handed up the ladder, and a murmur ran along the crowded deck as the men made way for a shaggy old quarter-master, as he carried off the boy in his arms to the surgeon. Then Charlie, dripping and rather exhausted, but still able to walk, stepped up the ladder on to the deck.

"Come on board, sir," were his first words as he saluted Colonel Cumbermere, who was waiting in readiness to wring his hand. As the soldiers caught sight of him they pressed forward, and cheer after cheer burst from the disordered and excited ranks.

With all his rattling good qualities, Jack is a little fond, when he gets the soldiers on board, of impressing upon them, that though they are doubtless fine fellows in their way, still they, after all, only belong to that degraded class comprehended under the generic term of "land-lubbers." On this occasion the soldiers were besides themselves with delight and pride to think that it was one of their number who had behaved so gallantly. They felt that the honour and glory of their order had been proudly vin-

licated in the sight of the blue-jackets; and they cheered over and over again as Charlie pushed his way amongst them, on his way below for a change of clothing.

The captain, though as glad as any one on board at Charlie's safe return, was scandalized at the fearful breach of man-of-war decorum. He shouted and gesticulated to stop the horrid din, but his shouts of "Silence!" were drowned in the cheers, and his gesticulations were mistaken for frantic applause, and the din was redoubled.

"Colonel Cumbermere, sir," roared the captain, almost foaming, "*will* you keep your men in order, sir?"

"Bugler!" shouted out Colonel Cumbermere, in sharp, rasping tones, which meant business, "sound the 'fall in'!"

The bugle sound rang out, and in a moment the din was hushed.

"Officers, join your detachments. Orderly, tell Mr. Dare I shall not, of course, require his attendance on parade."

Colonel Cumbermere then asked the captain's permission to address a few words to the men from the quarter-deck.

"Certainly, Colonel Cumbermere, certainly."

"Now, my men," said Colonel Cumbermere, after making the parade face him, "if you are going to lose your heads over every bit of excitement that turns up, as you have over this one, you won't be much use, I can tell you, where you are going to. If you can't keep cool in emergencies, you had better have stayed at home, each one of you, to mind the baby, or sew buttons on your grandmother's gown. That wouldn't excite your weak nerves too much, I suppose. It is very natural that you should all be pleased—indeed, it would be very unnatural if you were not pleased—that the poor lad who fell overboard and the gallant young fellow who went in after him have both been saved; but soldiers should be able to keep their feelings to themselves when it is necessary for them to do so. No one likes a British cheer more than I do, but it must be at the right

time and in the right place. The young officer who was the innocent cause of your disobedience of a standing order has furnished you with a lesson in coolness which I shall now pass on to you. You know that no officer is allowed to leave the ship without the sanction of the senior officer on board, and that on his return his first duty is to report himself. When the cry of 'Man overboard!' startled us all, Ensign Dare happened to be standing close to me as he caught sight of the unfortunate lad struggling in the water. Ensign Dare did not lose his head, though in one second he had made up his mind to lose his life if necessary. He acted up to the very letter of the order. 'May I leave the ship, sir?' he asked, touching his cap, and speaking as coolly as if the ship had been in harbour, and he were asking for leave to go ashore. I hardly knew what the gallant boy meant, and I did not reply. I suppose he took my silence for consent, for over he plunged. Then when he came on board, after a wearying struggle, not only for his own life, but for the life of another, his first thought was obedience to orders. His first words as he stepped on deck were, 'Come on board, sir.' There, my lads; that is what all of you so completely lost sight of a few moments ago—discipline. This young officer has set you a brilliant example in gallantry, and he has also set you an example in what is quite as valuable a quality in a soldier—discipline. I see before me old soldiers as well as young; but, old and young, take to heart the lesson in discipline which has this day been afforded by the youngest soldier amongst you—Ensign Charles Dare."

The conclusion of the colonel's speech was received in dead silence, but in the faces of the men it was apparent that the soldierly address had reached their hearts.

"Fall out the officers. The adjutant will dismiss the parade."

By the time the men had dispersed, Charlie Dare, in a change of clothes, reappeared on deck, looking none the worse for his gallant exertions. The captain was the first to go up and thank

him, with a hearty wring of the hand, for having saved one of his ship's crew. Many of the officers now crowded round Charlie, but he hastened away to the "sick bay" to inquire after the sailor lad. Here he was gratified to find that the poor half drowned boy was in a fair way to recovery; and when a "God bless you, sir, for it," trembled on the lad's lips, and a wealth of gratitude beamed from his eye, Charlie grasped him by the hand, and felt that his reward was indeed a rich one.

As he walked aft along the deck to rejoin his brother officers, the men, blue-jackets and red-coats, cast many an admiring glance at him.

"Dare," said his friend, the first lieutenant, as Charlie reached the quarter-deck, "you have indeed done credit to old Jack Paynter's bringing-up. I should like to renew my acquaintance with him. What's his address?"

Charlie readily gave the required information.

"I shall write and tell him," soliloquized the first lieutenant, as he took the address down in his note-book, "how his young *protégé* has acquitted himself. It will do the old boy's heart good."

CHAPTER X.

MALTA, bristling with fortifications and heavy guns, the Dardanelles, and the Bosphorus successively broke the monotony of the voyage, and then our voyagers found themselves within a few days' steam of their destination. There was now a general furnishing up of arms and accoutrements, and glorious determinations to "do or die" stirred alike the private soldier, as he cleaned his Minié rifle, and the officer, as he examined the lock of his revolver. On the morning of the day before the *Samson*

arrived off Balaklava, Charlie Dare was dressing himself in his cabin, when an old ship's quartermaster popped his head in at the door, and said, with a salute and a grim smile—

"Please, sir, we wants yer sword."

"Want my sword? Why, surely you've enough?" said Charlie, glancing at a bundle of swords which the old sailor carried under his arm. "Why, you remind me of Nelson's coxswain after one of his victories," added Charlie, with a good-humoured laugh.

"Lor', bless your heart, sir, we're a-getting all the solger officers' swords, and we're a-goin' to sharpen 'em up for'ard," explained the old tar with a chuckle, "and blessed if we won't give yours the best edge of the lot. Me and my messmates hasn't forgot that day between Gib and Malta."

Charlie willingly acceded to the request, and as he handed the old sailor the sword, he explained to him in a few words how, in other hands, it had already done good service for Old England.

"Lor' bless 'ee, sir, and has it, now? Well, I'll be bound you won't go disgracin' of it. No bloomin' fear o' that!" concluded the old tar, with a decided shake of the head, as he walked away to ask Simpkin for *his* sword.

"Want my sword to sharpen, do you?" said Simpkin, who at the moment was busily engaged in getting quite an armoury of his own into fighting trim. "Certainly, it's just the very thing I want. I was just thinking of doing it myself with my razor-strop. I say, mind you put a good edge on, you know, for, by Jingo! I mean to let them have it."

Here Simpkin struck a fencing attitude, and, with a ferocious glare in his eyes, whirled his sword wildly through the air. In imagination, Simpkin was slaying a dozen or so of the foe; but in reality, all he accomplished was the destruction of a water-bottle behind him.

"Bless your heart, sir, mind you don't go cuttin' your own head off, and savin' the Rooshians the trouble o' doin' it, as maybe you

will if you come that 'ere style o' cutlass drill," said the old sailor with a smile.

"Never fear," said Simpkin, stoutly ; "you see, there'll be more room on a battle-field than in this poky little cabin."

"There's a good bit o' gab about him, and them, they says, as is good at talkin' ain't much at doin' ; but, somehow, I think that young chap'll do his dooty," soliloquized the old salt as he left Simpkin, who immediately resumed his occupation of getting his weapons into the fittest condition for the fray. Simpkin evidently meant to make a big bag of Muscovites. Besides his Colts' revolver, he had a tiny six-barrelled pistol, which he intended to wear in the breast of his jacket or tunic, or whatever garment he went forth to battle in ; and then there was a sort of a dirk, which Simpkin remarked, with a bloodthirsty scowl, might "come in handy at close quarters." Simpkin also carried in his head numerous dodges for circumventing the enemy, but being all about as practically useful as those tactics for catching a bird, which consist in putting salt upon its tail, there is no need to enumerate them here. As Simpkin inspected, and cleaned, and sharpened, and loaded the formidable array of weapons, he kept up a running accompaniment of martial airs—sometimes vocal, sometimes on that most simple, portable, cheap, and easily-learnt instrument, the human whistle. At one time, in a voice a trifle thin in quality and tremulous—*con motto espressione*, as the music-books say—he would warble forth, "Go where glory waits thee ;" then with tender pathos, which almost brought the tears into his eyes, he would sing of "The girl he left behind him," for, of course, Simpkin was in love, and wore a daguerreotype of the object of his affections over his heart. The reminiscences that this ditty awakened were so touching, that, for a few moments, Simpkin betrayed symptoms of weakness ; but he speedily pulled himself together with "Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow," and Simpkin was himself again. In this improved frame of mind, he burst forth with great spirit into "The British Grenadiers."

“ ‘Some talk of Alexander,
And some of Hercules,
Of Hector and Lysander,
And——’ ” “Simpkin if you please,”

chimed in a voice. The opportune interpolator was Charlie Dare, who added, “*Arma virumque cano*, eh? I say, Simpkin, if weapons make a hero, you’ll cut all those ancient warriors out.”

“Ah! I expect I shall want them soon,” said Simpkin, with an air of mysterious desperation. “I say, Dare, I’ll tell you something, if you promise you won’t divulge it to a soul.”

“All right, I promise.”

“You’re the only one I know that I’d tell. You’re such a generous fellow, though, I know you won’t go forestalling me, for if I have drawn up a brilliant plan of my own, it is only fair that I should have the honour and glory of carrying it out, or of dying in the attempt.”

“Certainly so,” acquiesced Charlie.

“I mean to communicate it to Lord Raglan as soon after we arrive as possible; but in case anything happens to me in the meantime, I bequeath the plan to you. You would be just the fellow to carry it out.”

“Well, but what is it?” asked Charlie, with difficulty keeping his countenance. He knew from experience the style of scheme Simpkin’s brain was wont to weave.

Simpkin sunk his voice to a whisper, and unburthened his bosom.

“This is what it is. If Sebastopol has not yet fallen, I shall, after my plan has been laid before Lord Raglan, and of course accepted, at once make my preparations. I mean to get hold of a Russian soldier’s uniform, and then some day, when we repulse a sortie, I shall dress myself in it, and join the flying Russians, who will be too much engaged in getting away to notice me closely. In this way I shall get into Sebastopol, and then death or glory lies before me. I shall at once proceed——”

Here the narration of the stratagem was cut short. In his excitement, Simpkin had been flourishing about his pocket-pistol, which at the moment went off with a bang, and sent a bullet whizzing past the ear of a fat and irascible old major, who happened to be at the moment sitting at the table just outside Simpkin's cabin, enjoying a glass of whisky and water.

In one bound, Major Blazer was in the cabin, his face purple with rage.

"Who fired that pistol?" he spluttered out.

"Please, sir, I did," said Simpkin, feebly; "at least I didn't fire it; it went off."

"Went off, indeed!"

"Yes, it went off all of a sudden," stammered Simpkin.

"Went off all of a sudden! Did you ever hear, sir, of fire-arms going off by degrees? Did you ever come across a pistol or a gun, sir, in the habit of informing the bystanders that it was about to explode? 'Went off all of a sudden!' Why, the boy's an idiot—a born idiot, and not fit to be trusted with fire-arms. He knows nothing about them. Give them up, sir, at once."

Now, this was rather too much of a come-down, just after talking about "death or glory," too; and Simpkin not only failed to comply with the order, but actually darted a rebellious glance at his irate superior officer.

"Do you hear me, sir? I'll place you under close arrest if you don't at once give up every fire-arm in your possession."

There was no help for it; Major Blazer's tone and appearance rendered further resistance out of the question; and Simpkin, the embryo captor of Sebastopol, with a crest-fallen and dejected air, delivered the pistols over to the enraged Major Blazer.

"Now, young sir," said the field-officer, "let me give you a piece of advice."

The piece of advice was never given, for Major Blazer, hearing a footstep outside, and remembering all of a sudden that he had

left half his whisky and water on the saloon table, dashed out to save it from the hands of some clearing-away steward.

Poor Simpkin was very cast-down, but later in the day Charlie Dare mollified Major Blazer, and had the satisfaction of restoring the temporarily confiscated weapons to their rightful owner.

In the meantime, the sailors "for'ard" were hard at work. The military officers' swords were ground to razor-like sharpness, and the soldiers' bayonets were polished and pointed until they were nearly as sharp as the surgeon's lancet. It was with a grim delight, not unmixed, however, with some feelings of envy, that Jack busied himself over these warlike preparations, and many as well as forcible were his expressions of regret that he himself was not going to have a "slap at the Rooshians." It was eight bells in the afternoon before this work had been satisfactorily concluded.

"There, sir," said the same old quartermaster, as he handed Charlie his sword with a chuckle, "you might cut a Rooshian up into sassidges with that there sword, and then shave yourself afterwards. Beg pardon, sir," added the old salt, as he noticed that Charlie's chin was as innocent of a beard as a hen's egg—"beg pardon, sir, no offence meant."

Charlie laughed good-humouredly, and as he ran his thumb along the keen edge, promised to carry out the first direction as far as he was able; but as regarded the second, he agreed with the old sailor that it would be a work of supererogation.

The following morning, at an early hour, the *Samson* completed her voyage. She had barely cast anchor in Balaklava harbour, when she was boarded by numerous staff officers in search of the drafts for the regiments belonging to different divisions. The new arrivals were of course eagerly questioned as to what had been going on, and what were the expectations up at the front. Had Sebastopol been taken yet? Had any engagement on a large scale been fought since the Alma? To the first question, the reply was that Sebastopol was not taken, nor was it likely to be for some time; that it was a hard nut to crack, and the more

they knew of it the harder it seemed to get. To the second question there was a more satisfactory answer. Yes, there had been a battle since the Alma—the battle of Balaklava. Then followed a recital, which spread through the ship like wildfire, of the glorious deeds performed by our countrymen on the 25th October, 1854. Since that date nothing of very great importance had taken place, the staff officers said. Nothing more serious than occasional minor affairs between reconnoitring parties, and an occasional brush between outposts, but a sortie on a very large scale was expected before long, and they congratulated the newcomers on having, in all probability, arrived just in time for some hot work.

On this, Simpkin, whose martial ardour now knew no bounds, retired to his cabin, and went through the sword exercise with his own reflection in a tiny looking-glass stuck against the opposite bulkhead. Feeling after this performance that England's chance in the coming struggle was much improved, Simpkin proceeded to get his armoury into portable condition, and to make other preparations for landing.

The arrangements for the disembarkation of the troops were soon completed by the officers of the quartermaster-general's staff, in conjunction with the naval authorities, and in a few hours the different detachments under the guidance of staff officers were marching along the road to the British camps. On arriving at the lines occupied by his regiment, Charlie was received with open arms by Colonel Carruthers, his father's old friend, and by the officers of the regiment generally ; and Simpkin, who belonged to the same corps, had no cause to complain of his reception.

CHAPTER XI.

ON the morning of the 5th November, not three days after their arrival in the Crimea, Charlie and Simpkin lay in the same bell-tent, both wrapped in slumber. The full complement of the tent was three subalterns, but the third youngster was on duty in the trenches. The two sleepers were dreaming of home. Charlie's spirit was away at Clumberstone with his grandfather and old Jack Paynter ; and Simpkin was once more bidding a pathetic farewell to the girl he had left behind him.

Gradually the smile on Charlie's face—he was evidently dreaming something very amusing about old Uncle Jack—passed away, and for a few moments he turned uneasily on his lowly bed. Then suddenly he raised himself on his elbow, and listened.

“ But hark ! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echoes would repeat,
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before !
Arm ! arm ! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar.”

In one moment Charlie sprang to his feet and shook Simpkin.

“ Simpkin, up with you !”

“ Oh, dearest !” murmured Simpkin, “ a tress of your golden hair I'll twine—— Blazes ! what's the matter ?” suddenly added Simpkin in a very different key, as a violent shaking rudely dispelled his romantic dream. “ What's up, Dare ?”

“ Why, I am,” said Charlie, “ and I'd advise you to get up too, as quick as you can.”

“ Yes ; but I mean, what's the matter ?” asked Simpkin, rubbing his eyes and yawning.

“ Why, don't you hear ? There's the ‘ assemble ’ and the ‘ alarm,’ with the ‘ double ’ after it, going like mad all over the camp, and there's heavy firing up at the front.”

In a second Simpkin was on his feet. The two did not waste much time over their toilets. In a campaign, soldiers do not undress when they lie down to rest: the reverse operation, in fact, was in vogue in the Crimea during the winter months. Their swords were speedily buckled on, and they sallied forth to join their brethren in arms. Everything was all bustle outside in the feeble grey light of dawn.

“And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar,
And near the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star.”

Heavier and heavier grew the firing in the distance, and everyone felt that something much greater than an outpost affair was imminent. Amidst all the hurry and apparent confusion there were few who did not breathe a prayer, in which the dear ones at home, you may be sure, were the first remembered. There are some people who, like the curate in “*Tristram Shandy*,” think that soldiers seldom pray. To such I would quote the words of honest old Corporal Trim: “A soldier, an’ please your reverence, prays of his own accord as a parson; and when he is fighting for his king, and for his own life, and for his honour, too, he has the most reason to pray to God of any one in the whole world. But when a soldier has been standing for twelve hours together in the trenches, up to his knees in cold water, or engaged for months together in long, dangerous marches; harassed, perhaps, in his rear to-day; harassing others to-morrow; detached here; countermanded there; resting this night upon his arms, beat up in his shirt the next; benumbed in his joints; perhaps without straw in his tent to kneel on; he must say his prayers *how* and *when* he can.”

Charlie’s regiment was speedily formed up, and he and Simpkin

were "told off" by the adjutant to carry the colours. No time was lost in pushing forward to the scene of action, for messages had come down that the small body of our troops holding the position attacked were being crushed by overwhelming masses of the enemy.

The story of Inkermann—"the soldiers' battle," as it has been called, from the fact that owing to the confusion which prevailed there was but little opportunity for generalship—is too well known to be repeated here. Charlie Dare and Simpkin were speedily in the thick of the fray, their young faces flushed, and their eyes flashing with excitement.

Towards the afternoon, when the confusion and din of battle was at its height, Colonel Carruthers saw, with a true soldier's glance at the situation, so far as the fighting in his immediate vicinity was concerned, that a comparatively small body of men in compact formation launched upon the flank of the enemy would be worth any amount of this confused, indiscriminate hand-to-hand fighting. His mind was at once made up. He would try to get as many as possible of his regiment withdrawn from the *mêlée*. On clear ground, a little remote from the scene of combat, he would form them up in some semblance of that order which they, as well as all our men, had lost altogether. Then, skirting the field of battle, he would move forward, taking as much advantage as possible of the nature of the ground for concealment, form line on the Russian flank, fire a volley, and charge with bayonets. This plan was no sooner conceived than Colonel Carruthers proceeded to carry it out. Just behind him, pushing onward through the struggling, slashing, shrieking mass of humanity, was a portion of the colour party of his own regiment, consisting of Charlie Dare carrying the Queen's colour, and a couple of colour-sergeants. What had become of poor Simpkin and the regimental colour they did not know.

"Dare," said Colonel Carruthers, "let's get out of this. Follow me."

Into Charlie's flushed and excited face there came an expression of surprise and doubt. For a moment Colonel Carruthers wavered in the execution of his project. "If I fall before I have carried this out and with my back to the foe, I may die branded a coward. There may be eye-witnesses who may say hereafter that they saw Leonard Carruthers running away." Such was the horrible thought that crept into Carruthers' brave heart, and which very nearly for the moment turned him aside from the path of duty. Of his personal gallantry he had many times given signal proof. He now showed that he combined with this glorious attribute the highest order of moral courage. The appalling contingency which had forced itself on his mind might well have turned the bravest man from his purpose; but Colonel Carruthers' moral courage grandly mounted with the occasion.

"Yes, follow me, the colour party. Stick by me, bugler!" he exclaimed; and turning his horse to one side, he led the little party through the surging throng of friend and foe. His regiment happened to be one of those towards the right flank of the action, but it was fully a quarter of an hour before they were clear of the *mêlée*, and in that short space of time several of the little party had bitten the dust. The principal actors, however, consisting of Colonel Carruthers, Charlie Dare, with his Queen's colour, and the little bugler, to whom the Colonel gave a stirrup-leather, still remained, besides a couple of officers and a few non-commissioned officers and men who had stuck by their colours all through the fight. Following their commanding officer, wondering what he was up to, but still with implicit confidence in his action, the party doubled towards a ridge at a short distance.

"Where are you going, sir? where in the name of wonder are you taking that party to?" roared a brigadier, who happened to be galloping up towards the scene with his staff.

Carruthers clapped spurs to his charger, and in a few seconds was alongside the brigadier. A few words sufficed.

"Oh, very good, very good, Colonel. I hope you will be able to carry out your intention, though I doubt your being able to get your men together."

The words were hardly out of the brigadier's mouth when, with a groan, he fell from his horse, shot through one of his lungs.

"They've done for me, Seymour, my boy," he gasped, as his aide-de-camp dismounted and bent over his fallen chief. "Don't waste any time over me, Colonel. Go and carry out your intention. Seymour," added the brave old soldier, as Carruthers rode away, "I'd like to see if he succeeds. Have me carried to where he's going to form up."

The brigadier's dying wish—for such it was—they at once proceeded to carry out.

In a few moments the party had gained the ridge, and Colonel Carruthers, after bidding his men get under cover, explained his intentions in a few short words.

"Now, remain where you are for the present," he said, "all but the Queen's colour, the two sergeants of the colour party, and the bugler. Come along, Dare, it's necessary that we should be conspicuous. If anything happens to me," he added, turning to the group, "the manœuvre is to be carried out by the senior officer."

Carruthers, Charlie Dare with the colour, the two sergeants, and the bugler now ascended the summit of the ridge, and close to them lay the old brigadier.

"Bugler," said Colonel Carruthers, "sound the regimental call and the 'assemble.'"

The bugler, who was a mere child, seized his bugle which hung by his side, and was in the act of raising it to his lips, when a shell shrieked through the air and burst. There was a dull splash, a short, gasping scream, and all that remained of the little English soldier lad was a shapeless little bundle of coarse uniform and mangled flesh, staining the greensward a bright red. No, that was not all that remained. That ghastly little patch on the bright, bedabbled grass meant more than that a boy-soldier's spirit had

fled. It meant a mother's fond heart breaking in a lowly cottage far away in old England.

Hail, mighty Czar !

"Poor little fellow," said the Colonel, while from several of the men who were peeping over the ridge there burst many a cry of "Poor little Billy !"

"He is almost the last one here I could have spared in the present juncture," said the Colonel. "'I could have better spared a better man.' Is there any one here who can sound a bugle?" he added, looking at the little knot under cover.

There was no answer from any of them.

"I can, sir," said Charlie.

"*You*, Dare?"

"Yes, sir, any bugle call you like to tell me," replied Charlie, as he stooped down to take the bugle from the death-stiffened grasp of "little Billy." It was a work of some moments. Charlie could not bear to do it roughly, and the little hand, which looked as if it should have been playing marbles instead of being cold and stiff, was tightly clenched round the instrument. With a gentle force Charlie untwined the fingers, and then stood up, with the bugle in his hand, awaiting his Colonel's orders.

"Sound the regimental call and the 'assemble' ! was the mandate.

The calls rung out clear and loud.

"Sound the 'double' now," said the Colonel, as he looked eagerly for any response to the signal. "Sound again !" he added.

Again the calls rung out.

"How long can you keep on at it, Dare?" asked Carruthers.

"As long as you like, sir, with just a breath between each call," was the prompt reply.

"Very good ; keep on till I tell you to stop. Stay ; stick to the regimental call alone. That will be more likely to attract their attention ; never mind the others."

Over and over again Charlie kept on repeating the regimental call, and then, after a bit, by twos and threes, the men of the regiment emerged from the fighting throng, and made for the spot where they saw one of their colours waving in the breeze, and their Colonel standing beside it.

"Are they coming?" faintly asked the old brigadier, raising himself up on one hand.

"Yes, sir, fast," replied Carruthers.

"Well done," said the old soldier, and sinking back into his aide-de-camp's arms, he breathed his last.

Charlie still kept on bugling, and then a few officers and some more men turned up. Some of them limped, some had broken heads, and there were few who were not bleeding. Amongst them, to Charlie's great delight, Simpkin appeared staggering under his colour. Poor Simpkin had had an ugly cut on the head, and was faint from loss of blood; but he pluckily stuck to his colour, and after some kind brother officer had given him a pull at his flask, Simpkin was himself again.

After a time, a body of men and officers, sufficient for Colonel Carruthers' purpose, was formed up under cover of the ridge, and Charlie fell in his place, after a grateful squeeze of the hand from Carruthers, and a whispered "Charlie Dare, you're your father's own boy. I sha'n't forget this."

Taking advantage of the cover afforded by the ridge, Colonel Carruthers moved his regiment by fours for some distance, in a direction parallel to the scene of conflict. Then halting, he formed line, loaded, and advanced. As the men topped the crest of the ridge, they found themselves within a hundred yards of a mass of Russians pressing on to support their countrymen in front.

"Now, my men, we'll give them a volley, and then a taste of the cold steel. Now, recollect, fire together, and fire low; the line will fire a volley. Ready—present—fire!"

So well had Colonel Carruthers led his men, that their presence



"Over and over again Charlie kept on repeating the regimental call!"—p. 60

was not even detected by the Russians until the leaden hail tore through their ranks.

The heavy roll of musketry, and the almost simultaneous shrieks that accompanied it, had not died away, when the clear ringing voice of Carruthers was heard, as he made his way between two files to the front of the line——

“Now for the cold steel! Prepare to charge—charge!” and with a cheer which was taken up by the line, the gallant Carruthers dashed into the thick of the grey coats, fully twenty yards in advance of his men.

The sudden and unexpected apparition of a body of Englishmen on their flank, followed in quick succession by the volley and the charge, was too much for the Muscovites. They fell back upon their advancing comrades, and the whole dense column was thrown into disorder. In addition to this, a large body of their countrymen were thus cut off. Numbers of these, finding the “accursed island curs” (the little pet name the Muscovites gave us) not only in front, but also behind them, lost heart, and begged for quarter. I fear that, in the fierce heat of battle, this was not always given. Moreover, our men had found out from experience that it was an old Russian dodge to sue for quarter, and then when the foe was off his guard to use their weapons.

By this movement of Carruthers, so coolly planned, so gallantly carried out, the forward movement of the Russians was checked, and the regiments in rear of Carruthers had time to get into some sort of formation, and when in this way they bore down on the disordered ranks of the Russians, they carried all before them. Gradually the din of battle subsided, and by three o'clock in the afternoon one more victory was added to England's glorious roll.

Charlie Dare's bugling performance, with its brilliant results, was a great deal talked about, and throughout the division he became known as “Bugler Dare.”

Simpkin behaved with gallantry throughout, though the con-

finer nature of the conflict, and his duties of standard-bearer did not give much scope for that brilliant tactical mind of his. His pistol "went off" several times during the action; but on this occasion the explosions were not unintentional, and there was no Major Blazer by to take his arms away. At the conclusion of the battle, when, wearied out, the survivors threw themselves on the ground for a little rest, Simpkin seated himself on a stone, with his broken head between his hands, and in this touching position he was heard to remark in feeble tones—

"The old song says, 'Remember, remember the Fifth of November.' Well, I don't think I shall forget *this* one. We've had enough fireworks to-day to keep it alive in my memory for a considerable time."

CHAPTER XII.

SADLY did Sir George Dare and old Jack Paynter miss the youthful spirit which, for a dozen years or so, had made their secluded home so cheery and so full of interest. Morning and evening did the two old friends kneel together in prayer, to beseech the God of Battles to bless our arms in the struggle against might and oppression, and, amidst the deadly perils of the fight, to spare the bright young life so precious to them both. Often during the day and night was the same prayer silently repeated in their hearts, and there were few homes throughout Great Britain from which a similar prayer was not wafted heavenwards. It was a trying, anxious time—a time of heart-wringing suspense. What might to-morrow bring, was the gloomy question ever obtruding itself on their thoughts; and it was impossible to keep the most ghastly imaginings from the mind. Sometimes in the night Sir George would dream that he saw Charlie lying stiff and cold on the battle-field, and then the old man would wake

out of his agony, and pray until the sickening dread in his heart would be replaced by hope and comfort.

Jack Paynter's dreams, too, at this time were always of a war-like character. Sometimes at the head of a party of blue-jackets, he would be slashing and hewing his way to Charlie's rescue through a score or two of Russians ; and sometimes, as captain of a two-decker, he would run alongside, and lash his vessel to the flag-ship of the Russian admiral, who had somehow mysteriously got Charlie in irons down below. When such dreams as these disturbed the old sailor's rest, he would occasionally shout out at the top of his voice, " Now, my lads, give it 'em ! " or, " Follow me, the boarders ! " and then awake to find himself struggling with his bolster, under an impression that he had got hold of an obstreperous Muscovite.

Thus, in anxiety and suspense, the days passed slowly. One morning, a few weeks after Charlie's departure, the two old friends commenced the day after the usual custom. I am particular in referring to this day, as it was an eventful one. Before sitting down to breakfast, Sir George Dare read one of the lessons for the day, while Jack Paynter listened with earnest attention. His extreme interest in every word on such occasions always showed itself in a running commentary of undertone remarks, such as, " Aye, aye, " " Just so, " " Couldn't have been better, " &c. But on this particular morning his interest was deeper, if possible, and his interpolations more frequent, for the chapter Sir George read happened to be that one describing St. Paul's tempestuous voyage, and it was a narrative to which old Jack Paynter always listened with an interest that was professional as well as devotional. After the lesson, the two knelt together, and Sir George's voice was uplifted in prayer, while Jack Paynter chimed in at intervals with a devout but gruff " Amen. " He did not confine himself to the conclusion of each prayer. He said " Amen " whenever a word or a sentence struck him as being exceptionally good. Prayers having been concluded, Jack Paynter sallied forth with his tele-

scope under his arm, to sweep the horizon, and see how the weather looked before sitting down to breakfast. It was while he was thus engaged that the postman brought him two letters—one for himself and one for Sir George.

“Humph!” grunted Captain Paynter as he glanced at the latter, and pocketed it for the present, “only one of those confounded circulars and prospectuses those scoundrels in London are always sending him, just because his name is in the ‘Baronetage.’ I’ll take it to him after I’ve had a look at mine.”

Old Jack Paynter’s correspondence was not large, and the letter occasioned him considerable mystification. He looked at the address steadily for a long time, to make sure that it really was addressed to him, and as he could not see very clearly without his spectacles, he unscrewed the lens of the telescope, and subjected the envelope to a severe inspection through it. There was no mistake about it, the letter was for him all right. Old Jack’s stout heart sickened within him as he noticed that it came from foreign parts, and recollected how the last foreign letter received by him had been the precursor of sad tidings for his old friend. With trembling hands he tore open the envelope, and as he read his face gradually brightened up. There was evidently no bad news. The writer commenced by saying how he had served as a youngster under Captain Paynter many years ago, and was now first lieutenant of the *Samson*, on board of which ship he had met young Dare. At this point the reader’s interest received a sudden fillip; and as he continued the perusal the colour mounted into his cheek, and the hand holding the telescope lens trembled so much that the words seemed to be dancing a wild hornpipe on the paper. Still he read on, getting more and more excited, and then giving the letter a wave as if he had been going to cheer and had then thought better of it, he strode off to Sir George in the breakfast-room.

“George, I’ve had a letter from an old friend—at least a young friend, I should say, for he was a boy when he served under me

in my last cruise. Why he should have cherished so tender a recollection of me all these years I don't know, as I don't suppose I ever did anything more for him than occasionally masthead him or stop his leave ashore."

"I'm glad you've had this letter, Jack," said Sir George, as he noticed the ill-suppressed glee in the other's countenance. "Ah, Jack, it's a pleasant thing, isn't it, old fellow, to feel that we are not forgotten by the younger generation! You have evidently had pleasant news, too, haven't you?"

"Oh, pretty well. My correspondent is now first-lieutenant of the *Samson*, which Charlie went out in, and he writes from on board that ship."

Sir George looked up with a keen searching eye; but all he read in old Jack Paynter's face was that he was bursting with some intelligence, which he was bottling up until he was purple in the face.

"Does your friend say anything of Charlie, Jack?"

"Oh, yes, he mentions him in a casual sort of way. I say, George, a little incident occurred on the voyage which may be of some interest to you," said Jack Paynter, with a futile effort to appear calm and collected.

"Out with it, Jack."

"Well, one afternoon, soon after leaving Gibraltar, the *Samson* was running under sail and steam quite ten knots an hour. Ten knots an hour, sir!" (It was now all up with Jack Paynter's coolness; he roared.) "Ten knots an hour through a heavy sea. Suddenly the cry of 'Man overboard!' was raised, and the ship swept past a sailor lad struggling in the waves. Now, sir," said Captain Paynter, as he polished his head with a flaming red bandana handkerchief, "it's a way we have at sea, that, when a man falls overboard and can't swim, somebody goes in after him. But when there's a heavy sea running, and the ship is slashing through the water at ten knots an hour, by the God who made us all, heroes and cowards alike, the man who jumps overboard has

a heart of oak. Of all those aboard the *Samson*, soldiers and sailors, who do you think was the one to jump in after the drowning man?"

Sir George rose from his chair, placed a hand on Jack Paynter's shoulder, and a voice came softly from two quivering lips—

"Jack, it was my boy."

"Aye, George. By the living Jingo, it was Charlie. It was *our* boy!" roared Jack Paynter, as he raised a fist like a leg of mutton, and knocked Sir George back again into his chair. "Be 'calm, George, be calm," continued Jack Paynter, gesticulating wildly. "Yes, Charlie jumped in after the drowning man, and they were deuced near being lost, both of them; but, God be praised, they were both picked up."

"Thank God!" fervently exclaimed Sir George.

"But it was the way in which the whole thing was done that was so first-rate," continued Jack Paynter, again raising the leg-of-mutton fist, and bringing it down on the breakfast-table with a thwack that set all the crockery on it jingling. "There, there, take the letter, and read it for yourself, George. I feel I can't work myself up into a sufficiently excited state to do justice to the narrative. Read it out aloud. I'll make the tea."

Sir George took the first-lieutenant's letter, and commenced reading out aloud as requested. It was impossible for him to entirely control his feelings, and his voice trembled with emotion, as he read how the officer commanding the troops had held Charlie up to all the soldiers on board, as a pattern in discipline as well as in gallantry.

"Now, George, come and have your breakfast," said Jack Paynter, as Sir George folded up the letter, and handed it back. "Oh, by the way, there's a letter for you, George. Shoved it into my pocket, and quite forgot all about it. It's only one of those abominable circulars or prospectuses, or whatever they call 'em, full of false promises, they're always sending you. Shall I throw it into the fire, and save you the trouble of opening it?"

"No, Jack, I'd better have a look at the inside first."

"Oh, as you like ; of course it's yours, but it's only a waste of time. Here, tear it up, George, without honouring the scoundrels by reading their plausible lies."

"No, Jack," said Sir George, with a quiet smile, "I'll read it."

"I wouldn't be bothered even to tear the envelope open."

Nevertheless, Sir George took the letter, and, what is more, became very serious over it.

"Jack," he said, as he looked up from the letter with his usual quiet self-possession, "It's just as well we didn't throw this into the fire. I think I was quite right to read it."

"Don't tell me, George," said "Old Bloomin' Politeful," in a severe tone of voice, "that you're going to be taken in again by these humbugs?"

"You're on a wrong tack, old man. There's nothing about companies, and shares, and allotments, and all that sort of thing in this letter. It's from a lawyer——"

"Hang it, then !" spluttered Jack Paynter ; "don't have anything to do with it. Don't read another word. Here, let me take it up with the tongs, and drop it out of the window."

"No, thank you, Jack ; I'll keep it for the present, at all events. It contains some rather valuable information."

"Oh, pooh," said Jack Paynter, blowing his cheeks out, "you'll have to pay six and eightpence for every word, dot, and comma in it. That's about the value *you'll* get out of it, George."

"No, Jack, there is more than that to be got out of this."

"How much, George, how much ?" asked Jack Paynter, with an air of severe banter.

"A hundred thousand pounds, minus probate duty, Jack."

The air of banter vanished like a flash of lightning, and "Old Bloomin' Politeful" opened his mouth to its full extent, and gasped as if he were vainly trying to swallow the astounding fact.

He then rolled his eyes wildly for a few moments, and feebly murmured, "How do you mean, George?"

"Why, I've been left a hundred thousand pounds, and this letter is from a lawyer, acquainting me with the fact. There, read it for yourself, Jack."

Captain Paynter took the letter in a dazed bewildered way, and read:—

"LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

"November 3. 1854.

"SIR,—We have much pleasure in writing to inform you that our late client, Mr. Edward Read, sugar refiner, of Jamaica Buildings, Bermondsey, who died at his residence at Highgate on the 29th ultimo, has bequeathed to you by will the bulk of his fortune, amounting to one hundred thousand pounds in the Funds. We also, in accordance with special instructions from our late client, beg to hand you herewith a letter written by himself to you some months previous to his demise. If you will acquaint us with the name of your solicitor, we shall at once place ourselves in communication with that gentleman; or, should you prefer it, we shall be happy to act for you in the matter. Awaiting your instructions, and trusting that you will accept our respectful congratulations,

"We have the honour to be, sir,

"Your obedient and humble servants,

"MARKWELL AND TOYNES,

"Solicitors to the late Edward Read, Esq.

"Sir George Dare, Bart., etc., etc.,

"Clumberstone, North Devon."

"George, dear old friend, I congratulate you," said Jack Paynter, in a hoarse tremulous voice, as he concluded the perusal of the astounding missive.

"Don't congratulate me yet, Jack. The chances are a hun-

dred to one against my accepting this legacy. This kind, would-be benefactor of mine is utterly unknown to me. He must have had some kinsfolk whom I shall never supplant. I shall distribute it amongst them."

"But, George, see what he says in his letter. It will doubtless contain some explanation of his strange will."

"Yes, I suppose it will; but I cannot think that it will be an explanation satisfactory to my conscience. I was waiting until you had finished. We will read it now. Come, Jack, we'll put our two old grey heads together."

Reverentially Sir George broke the seal, opened the letter, and slowly the two friends mastered the following contents:—

"DEAR SIR,—When you read these words, the hand that has penned them will be mouldering in the grave. I shall place this letter in the hands of my solicitors, Messrs. Markwell and Toynes, with instructions that it is to be forwarded to you after my death, together with an intimation of the contents of my will, so far as it concerns yourself. Though in all probability you have never heard of my existence, I am a kinsman of yours, and a Dare. My father, who was a first cousin of *your* father, was a kind and loving parent, but a man who carried family pride to an extreme. I was the youngest of the family, and my mother died at my birth. I had three brothers, all considerably older than myself—one went into the church, one into the army, and the third into the navy; for, said my father, the church or arms are the only two professions a Dare can enter. A Dare cannot stoop to trade. My father died when I was a lad of sixteen. My brothers had all gone before him. The clergyman died of a malignant fever caught in the discharge of his parochial duties, the sailor was drowned, the soldier speedily ran through his small fortune, became involved in debt, got into the hands of Jewish money-lenders, and eventually committed suicide. At my father's death I was left to struggle in the world. Strange to

say, in spite of my bringing up, I possessed not only business faculties, but also a strong liking for business, and into business of some description I determined to go. I commenced at the very foot of the ladder as an office-boy in a large sugar-refining business. Before starting on this career I dropped the name of Dare, out of deference to my dear dead father's susceptibilities. There was in my heart a lingering fondness for the name which he had borne, and of which he had been so proud; and though I discarded the name of Dare, I still retained in my new name of Read, every letter of the dear old family surname. 'Read,' you will perceive is an anagram of Dare. There is no occasion to enter here upon my early struggle. Suffice it to say, I have prospered and have grown rich. Beneath my business habits and proclivities there seems to be a slight undercurrent of family pride which, as the son of my father, I suppose I could not but inherit. You are the head of the family, and as such I have watched your career with pride and interest. I was present during the trial of yourself and your fellow-directors, and I was one of the many who grasped your hand as you left the court with your character higher than ever in the estimation of all who know anything about you. Your subsequent noble conduct in devoting your fortune to the relief of those who had been ruined by no fault of your own, raised you still more in my opinion. I am now an old man, and I feel my end is near. 'We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out.' I cannot take the money I have toiled for away with me. The best I can hope to do with it is to leave it in the hands of one who will, under God's blessing, make the noblest use of it. Such an one I know you to be. Accept the legacy from me, George Dare, my kinsman. You will supplant no one. You are, as far as I know, the nearest in blood to me. Take it, and the blessing of God be upon you and it. Farewell. We may meet in another and better world.

"EDWARD READ, *ne* DARE."

For some moments the two old friends remained silent and solemn. Captain Paynter was the first to speak.

"George, you'll take it now, won't you?"

"Yes, Jack, I shall accept it as a trust. God grant we may use it wisely and well."

"*We*, George? What do you mean? What have I to do with it?"

"This much, old friend. You and I shall go hand in hand in wealth as we have done in comparative poverty. You'll help me to do good with it, Jack, just as if it were your own."

"George, d-d-dont be so selfish and unfeeling. You've given me a horrid cold in the head," said poor "Old Bloomin' Politeful," as he hurriedly pulled out the flaming bandana handkerchief, and blew his nose until the room re-echoed with the blast.

"Come, Jack, let us together invoke a Divine blessing on our work."

"Aye, aye, George."

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the evening the two old friends sat together as usual, smoking the calumet of peace, and sipping the glass of contentment. It was grog time. By old Jack Paynter's elbow stood a jorum of hot rum and water, and Sir George Dare occasionally withdrew his cigar from his lips, and wetted his whistle with a little weak sherry and seltzer. The room looked snug and comfortable. The fire burned brightly, the red curtains were drawn across the window, the smoke curled peacefully from Captain Paynter's pipe, and his hot rum punch shed a sweet fragrance around. Very cosy and snug it all looked inside, but outside the wind shrieked and the sea roared angrily.

“ Neptune’s artillery boomed ’long the shore,
In cavern, ’gainst rock, and o’er shallow ;
The blast snatched the spray and whirled it away
Right inland o’er cottage and fallow.”

“ It’s a dirty night,” quoth Jack Paynter. “ I’m glad I hoisted my storm signal early in the day ; not one of the boats went out, and two or three in the offing ran in directly they saw it. They’re all snug in harbour now.”

Here “ Old Bloomin’ Politeful ” rewarded his foresight with a gulp of grog, and after a pause, re-opened the conversation.

“ Do you mind my opening the window just a little, George ? ” he asked, as he walked across the room.

“ Not in the least, Jack, if you like it.”

“ The rain won’t beat in ; the wind is t’other way,” said Jack Paynter, as he drew aside the curtain, raised the sash a few inches, and sniffed the briny gale.

“ Ah,” said “ Old Bloomin’ Politeful,” with a deep-drawn inhalation, “ isn’t that delicious ? ” And with a rapt expression he stood listening to the warring of the elements.

“ George, isn’t that magnificent ? ” he asked, as the roar of the waves filled the room. “ What music is there equal to the voice of the sea ? No woman’s tones are softer than its murmur. No notes are so liquid as the whisperings of the tiny waves to each other, as they ripple on a calm night. What mother’s lullaby is equal to that of the sea, as you lie in your bunk and hear it gurgling and eddying along the ship’s side within two or three inches of your ear ? And then what sound is so grand, so magnificent, as when it roars as it’s doing now ? Ah, George, all your military bands—all the military bands in the whole world, all braying and clashing, and clanging together, couldn’t make music so great, so grand as that ! ”

Sir George turned, and looked with something like admiration on the old sailor’s face, its rugged lines lit up with the fire of enthusiasm.

"Yes, Jack, it is great and grand, 'for the sea is His, and He made it.'"

"Right, George, right. That's the way to look at it. I'm afraid my mind was full of boarding a Frenchman in a gale of wind."

Sir George did not reply, and for a long time he sat in his chair, silently gazing into the fire.

"What a night to be under canvas, Jack," he at length remarked, with a slight sigh.

"Very little canvas, George, would be set a night like this—just enough to steady her, if you could even carry that much without its being blown away."

"Oh, Jack, Jack, you incorrigible old sea-monster, I meant under canvas on shore—in tents, Jack, in tents."

"Aye, aye, of course it would be, George."

"I'm afraid our poor fellows before Sebastopol will have a hard time of it this winter, Jack. Our commissariat, too, seems breaking down."

"Poor fellows, poor fellows!" said Jack Paynter.

The subject dropped, and for a long time the two sat silently gazing into the fire. The thoughts of each were away in the Crimea.

Gradually there stole into Sir George Dare's face an expression of deep but pleasant thought. Some bright inspiration had suddenly cast a ray of light on the gloom of his reverie.

"Jack," he at length said, in a tone of voice which evidently meant there was something very important coming. At all events so thought Jack Paynter, for he looked up with an expectant air, and asked, "What's in the wind now, George?"

"It's a good wind, I hope, that will blow ill to no one, and some good to a great many. My heart and head have been very busy for the last half-hour, but I would not say anything to you until I had the plan all cut and dried. We'll devote a great deal of this money to a great and noble purpose. You and I, Jack, thank God, will be able to do something more for our gallant

countrymen than stay at home at ease by our firesides, thinking of them in their peril and hardships. We'll hire one of the largest and roomiest yachts we can get hold of for the winter, stock her from stem to stern with articles of food and comfort, and sail for the Crimea. Do you think, Jack, you could navigate her out?"

At this question Jack Paynter's face, which had been glowing with excitement and delight, fell fifty degrees below blank astonishment and indignation.

"I didn't think this of you, George," he muttered in tones of deep reproach; "I didn't indeed. If any other man in the world but you, George, had expressed to me a doubt of my ability to take a ship to any port on this globe, I'd have killed him—don't interrupt me, George—I'd have killed him, I tell you, and eaten him. By the living Jingo, I would, without pepper or salt!"

"No, no, Jack, I never doubted your ability," said Sir George, with a kind smile. "Instead of *could*, I meant and should have said *would*."

"Ah, that's a craft, George, of quite a different rig—would I? Look here, George, round the steering-wheel of many a man-o'-war there's this motto 'ready, aye ready,' and in old Jack Paynter's heart you'll find the same motto. Will I take your craft out? Aye, George, 'Ready, aye ready.'"

"God bless you, old Jack!" said Sir George, with great feeling. "Isn't it glorious to think that we two old fellows will be of some use to our country still? We cannot carry succour to the whole army, but we can carry comfort to numbers of poor fellows, and give new life to many a spirit drooping under hardship and disease."

"You've given new life to me already, George. It makes a young man of me to think we shall be up and doing. Hooray! we're once more on the active list." And old Jack Paynter rubbed his hands gleefully. "By the piper who played before Moses, I'm no longer an old hulk. I feel as if I could show the smartest young maintopman in the service the way. Clear the decks for a hornpipe."

And here "Old Bloomin' Politeful" gaily whistled a lively measure, folded his arms after the orthodox nautical fashion, and broke into a sailor's hornpipe with such vigour, that he kicked one of his slippers over his own head into the fire. This brought the performance to an abrupt conclusion.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Jack Paynter, as he snatched the article out of the flames. "I haven't got my dancing-pumps on, or I'd have footed it with the best of them, and showed you, George, that I hadn't forgotten my steps."

It was some time before Captain Paynter calmed down sufficiently to admit of a council of war being held. After a second glass of grog, however, his excitement was somewhat allayed, and a full and careful discussion of the project was entered into. For hours they talked and planned, and it was finally settled that Jack Paynter was to proceed at once—the very next day, in fact—to Southampton, for the purpose of picking up a vessel of the required description, fitted with an auxiliary screw if possible, as time would be an important object; while Sir George would go up to London, and enter into the necessary arrangements with his solicitor. By the time the discussion was brought to a satisfactory conclusion, it was long past bed-time, and, according to their nightly custom, before retiring to rest the two knelt down, and Sir George's voice was raised in prayer. On special occasions, these prayers were often impromptu—"straight from the heart," as old Jack put it; but they were always that. On this particular night, Sir George poured forth his thanks for the Almighty providence which had saved his brave boy from a watery grave, and he also implored a Divine blessing on the undertaking which he and his old friend were about to embark upon.

At the conclusion of these prayers, Sir George was about to rise from his knees, when old Jack Paynter lifted up a finger, and in a voice, nearly drowned at the moment by a fierce gust which angrily shook the cottage to its foundations, said—

"Hark, George ! those afloat."

"Yes, true," said Sir George, and for the next few moments the two were earnestly engaged in a prayer for those in peril at sea.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE second day after the receipt of Messrs. Markwell and Toynes' letter found Sir George Dare and his old crony separated for the first time in many years—the former in London, in close counsel with his solicitor ; the latter at Southampton, on the look-out for a vessel. We will accompany Sir George, leaving old Jack Paynter in a congenial sphere of action. Sir George Dare's solicitor was old, trustworthy, able, cautious, and devoted to the interests of the Dares, whose legal adviser he had been for considerably over a quarter of a century. He at first looked upon the scheme as Quixotic, and attempted to argue his client out of it ; but Sir George Dare, with all his gentle suavity of manner, was the last man in the world to be pooh-poohed off that line which, in his own mind, he had chalked out to himself as the right one. Failing then to convince his client, the astute old lawyer not only promised his co-operation, but also threw himself into the cause with energy and zeal. Moreover, he enlisted the services of his son, who was to be his successor when he went the way of the world. The business on hand, of course, required a large amount of ready money, and those of my readers who have been fortunate enough to have been left legacies will know that you cannot lay your hand on the money all at once ; but in this case the security was so good, that the lawyers were able, without the slightest difficulty, to raise, on very reasonable terms, as much money for Sir George as he liked.

In a few days of his setting out for Southampton, Jack Paynter sent a message to say that he had got hold of just the very craft

they wanted, a large, roomy yacht—one of the largest in the whole squadron, in fact, being upwards of two hundred and fifty tons, and fitted with an auxiliary screw. The owner, however, would only sell, and not let the yacht on hire for the winter. “But,” added Jack, in his letter to Sir George, “we can pick her up pretty cheap now at the end of the yachting season, and sell her at the commencement of the next, by which time we shall have done with her, for more than we gave; so that buying will, after all, be much cheaper than hiring.” Accordingly, in a few days the purchase was concluded, shipwrights were set to work at sundry alterations regarding stowage room, and then Jack Paynter repaired to London to assist his coadjutor. A very busy time had the two old fellows, but of course, they could have done comparatively little had they not been so ably and so energetically assisted by Sir George’s lawyers, especially the younger one, whose industry, and knowledge of business always surmounted every difficulty.

Under his management, contracts were entered into with different firms for the immediate supply of various articles, and in a very short time a formidable array of bales, and packages, and casks were forwarded to Southampton, and stowed in the hold of the *Bounty*, the name Captain Jack Paynter had very aptly, as he thought, bestowed upon the yacht. These bales and casks contained enormous numbers of thick woollen Jerseys, comforters, warm mits, lint for wounds, etc., etc. The inner man was considered as well as the outer. There were large quantities of what is known in medico-military language as “hospital comforts,” such as arrowroot, and sago, and port wine. Of this last commodity there was a large stock; none of your logwood and blacking, but good, sound old port, a glass or two of which every day would save many a life trembling in the balance. There were also large stores of medicines, especially quinine, chlorodyne, and chloroform, which are the three most valuable medicaments in a campaign. There was something nicer than physic. Well did Sir

George knew the British soldier's tastes, for whether in command of a company, a wing, a regiment, or a brigade, the comfort and happiness of the men under him had ever been his study. He knew what a solace, amidst the miseries of starvation and exposure, a pipe full of "baccy" often was to the British soldier; and knowing this, Sir George was not likely to omit the item of tobacco from his stores. He entered into contracts with several large wholesale firms of tobacconists—one could not have executed the order in the time—to supply him, within a few days, with 5000 lbs. of tobacco, made up into half-pound lead-foil packages. Sir George's eyes glistened and his kind heart swelled, as he pictured the delight with which some war-worn soldier, accustomed to get his tobacco by the "screw," would receive one of these half-pound packages.

"It sha'n't be my fault, either," said Sir George, "if there aren't a few plum-puddings in the Crimea this Christmas. At all events, some of the poor fellows will have that trifle to put them in mind of their happy English homes." And with this kind and festive object, barrels of flour, of currants, of raisins, and of the various other necessary ingredients, were included in the *Bounty's* heterogeneous cargo.

In the midst of these preparations, the glorious news of the battle of Inkermann arrived, and the hearts of Sir George Dare and Jack Paynter were made glad by the receipt of two letters, one from Charlie and the other from Colonel Carruthers. Strange though it may appear at first, the latter letter was more interesting to them than the other. The reason was this: in his letter telling them of the battle, Charlie said but little of himself; while, on the other hand, the object of Colonel Carruthers' letter to the old soldier was to tell him how gallantly and coolly his boy had behaved in the first action—his "baptism of fire," as the French term it—and of the valuable services he had performed in assisting to reassemble the regiment. It is needless to tell of the effect all this had on Sir George and Jack Paynter; how the former, in

his calm, collected way, was proud and grateful, and how the latter blew out his cheeks, and puffed, and rumped his hair up until he looked like an infuriated cockatoo, and then requested Sir George to take it coolly, as he did. The reader should now know both characters well enough to need no such details on this point.

CHAPTER XV.

So well and willingly did all engaged in the matter work that within three weeks of that eventful evening, when Sir George first conceived his generous and noble project, the *Bounty* was loaded and ready for sea. Old Jack Paynter, who, of course, assumed command, had got together a capital crew, most of whom hailed from Clumberstone, sturdy toilers of the sea only too proud to sail under "Old Bloomin' Politeful." Before starting, the two friends ran down to Clumberstone to pay a parting visit to the little home which had been such a peaceful haven of rest to them after years of buffeting about in the world. The fishing folk down in the village assembled to give them a hearty farewell. There were few, if any, amongst them who, in sickness or hard times, had not had a helping hand held out to them from the cottage on the hill, and many a hardy fisherman brushed away a tear, and many a woman stifled a sob, as the two old friends, amidst ringing cheers, drove away from their peaceful home, to encounter perils and hardships which belonged more properly to the path trod by younger generations.

It was a bright morning in the early December that the *Bounty* slipped her moorings, and spread her white sails to the favourable breeze. It was a sight to behold "Old Bloomin' Politeful" once more on the briny deep. No better sailor ever trod a deck, and the way in which he handled the craft showed that his seamanship

had not grown rusty during his long sojourn on shore. That he had hardly kept pace with the times was not to be denied. He was wedded to old fashions, and looked upon steam as an invention which, though certainly useful at times, was opposed to all true seamanship. The *Bounty* was not what could be called a steam yacht. She was a large schooner fitted with an auxiliary screw, to be used only in calms, or for the purpose of getting into or out of harbours. As the *Bounty* was favoured with fair gales, the "old kettle," as Jack Paynter contemptuously termed her steam apparatus, was not in requisition. They made a glorious voyage as far as the Black Sea. Here they encountered a fierce storm, which obliged them to "lie-to" for twenty-four hours. The *Bounty*, however, behaved splendidly, and as soon as the weather moderated she spread her pinions once more, and careered gaily towards her port. In a couple of days they arrived off Balaclava; and Jack Paynter, in his anxiety to make the port before nightfall, ordered the engineer to "set that blessed old kettle of his on the boil," or, in other words, to get steam up. The wind soon after freshened up astern, and, under sail and steam, the *Bounty* speedily arrived off the mouth of the harbour, which was full of men-of-war, transports, and merchantmen. Captain Jack Paynter trod the deck with a beaming eye and a proud mien. He was in his element. Here was an opportunity of showing the younger generation a neat bit of seamanship. Dashing the *Bounty* rounded under the stern of one ship and crossed the bows of another, while "Old Bloomin' Politeful," armed with a speaking-trumpet, stood roaring out his orders in tones of thunder. Having brilliantly threaded his way through the outer lines of shipping, Captain Paynter made for a snug berth close in shore, and commenced reducing his spread of canvas. Sail after sail was taken in, still on went the *Bounty* with but slightly diminished speed.

"If you please, sir," said the chief engineer, who was on deck, "don't you think you had better——"

At this point of his remark, the poor man's head was all but blown off. "Old Bloomin' Politeful" turned his speaking-trumpet full upon him, and let fly bang into his tympanum with a mighty roar: "Don't you dare to tell *me*, sir, how to handle a ship! Hard-a-port there!"

"Hard-a-port it is, sir," replied the man at the tiller.

It was a close shave. The *Bounty* just passed within a yard of a ship's stern, and still she sped on, though not an inch of canvas was now on her.

"Hard a-starboard;" now roared Jack Paynter.

"Hard a-star——"

Before the man could repeat the order, and obey it, he was all but thrown off his legs. With a crash the *Bounty* ran right into a two-decker. Simultaneously with the crash, Jack Paynter dropped his speaking-trumpet, and clasping his head with both his hands, murmured, in heart-broken accents, "Oh, lor'! oh, lor'! I forgot I was a steamer. That blessed old kettle's been too much for me."

But "Old Bloomin' Politeful's" cup of bitterness was not yet full. On the taffrail of the two-decker jumped her captain, and in accents anything but soft and mild, requested to be informed what *landlubber* they had got in command of that yacht?

Landlubber!

He of all men in the world; he, Captain Jack Paynter, retired post-captain of the Royal Navy, a landlubber!!

"Old Bloomin' Politeful" a landlubber!!!

Called a landlubber, too, by a British naval officer in full uniform!!!!

More degradation could not have been heaped upon him. It was piling Ossa upon Pelion, and then piling them both upon Captain Paynter. No wonder he was crushed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE necessity for immediate action soon roused old Jack Paynter to exertion, and his gruff words of command were once more heard. The bows of the *Bounty* were stove in, and the water was rushing in like a mill race. The only chance of saving the valuable cargo was to beach the vessel, and with this object Captain Paynter, after having secured a sail over and under the bows to check the influx of water in some degree, steered for a sandy spot on the coast, and went full speed ahead. There was no confusion on board, and the vituperative captain of the two-decker, could he have seen Captain Paynter now issuing his orders calmly and wisely, would have at once withdrawn the opprobrious epithet of landlubber. The boats were all cleared away, ready to be lowered in case the *Bounty* went down before reaching the shore, and as many articles as the crew could collect were stowed in them. All this time not a word passed between Jack Paynter and Sir George Dare. The latter busied himself in pointing out to the crew the articles it would be most expedient to save, and not even an unkind look did he cast at his friend, though his heart was bitterly wrung with disappointment. Lower and lower settled the *Bounty* in the water, and slower and slower became her speed. She was about a hundred yards from the shore when her fires were put out, and then all on board felt her chance was gone. So rapidly did she now settle down, that the crew had only just time to lower the boats, and get into them before she sank. Captain Paynter was the last to leave the sinking vessel, which almost went down under his feet. Never had poor old Jack Paynter been more miserable than when he stood up in his boat, and, looking back, saw nothing of the smart, trim *Bounty* but her masts sticking above water.

Numerous boats which had put off from the different men-of-war were now on the scene, to render any assistance that might be required. A landing was speedily effected, and the small portion of the *Bounty's* rich cargo that had been snatched from the greedy sea was placed in safety. The naval officers in charge of the men-of-war's boat crowded round Sir George Dare, anxious for some particulars, while the blue-jackets fraternized with the *Bounty's* crew. Old Jack Paynter disappeared from the scene, and sought relief for his wounded spirit in solitude. He was soon missed by Sir George Dare, who at once went in search of him. He found him sitting on a stone near the water's edge, with his head bowed down and buried in his hands. So absorbed in his bitter reflections was poor old Jack Paynter, that he neither saw nor heard anyone approaching. Sir George stood watching him in silence. Presently from between the fingers of the brown knotted hands there rolled a great tear.

"Jack, dear old boy," said Sir George, as he placed his hand affectionately on the other's shoulder.

Jack Paynter started, but still he kept his face buried in his hands, and the tears trickled faster through his fingers.

"Oh, George, George, I can't look you in the face."

"Nonsense, Jack. Give me your hand, old friend, and look into my face. You won't see anything disagreeable there, I promise you. Come, Jack."

"George, this kindness pierces my heart more than hard words. Abuse me, George, abuse me, I deserve it. Call me a confounded, cantankerous, obstinate, pig-headed old fool, George, but don't kill me with kindness. I've brought ruin on your generous, noble work. I've robbed the suffering. Oh, George, forgive me."

And as he spoke these words, the bluff, burly old sailor buried his face in his red bandana handkerchief, and sobbed like a child.

"Come, come, Jack, take my arm, and let us see at once about procuring transport for what we have saved. Let us hope for the best. The ships of war will, I'm certain, do everything they can

for us, and will set their divers to work at once on the wreck, and we may yet recover some of the cargo. There's a great deal of it that salt-water won't do much harm to."

"Ah, George, but they can't raise the ship. I shudder when I think of the thousands and thousands of your money I've sent to the bottom."

"Well, *don't* think of it, then, Jack. Come along, let's set to work at once about making the best of it. Then there's our boy to find out. We may see him in a few hours. Think of that, Jack, and cheer up. Come, let us join those kind-hearted naval officers, who have so promptly come to our assistance."

"Hold hard a bit, George, until I swab down decks," and old Jack Paynter suited the action to the words by rolling up the red bandana into a great ball, and pommelling his eyes with it for about two minutes.

Under the guidance of some of the naval officers, Sir George and Jack Paynter speedily found an officer of the quartermaster-general's staff at Balaclava, who, on hearing of the nature of the stores, willingly provided the necessary transport for their conveyance up to the front. He also promised that the department would do its utmost, in conjunction with the naval authorities, to recover as much as possible of the sunken *Bounty's* cargo; and feeling that some recognition was due to such noble benefactors, placed a couple of horses at the disposal of Sir George and Jack Paynter, and provided them with an escort to conduct them to the lines in the camp before Sebastopol occupied by Charlie Dare's regiment.

"May I ask if you've any particular friend in that regiment?" asked the courteous assistant-quartermaster-general.

"Yes, our boy," said Sir George and Jack Paynter in a breath.

The staff-officer smiled, and Sir George explained that Dare was the name of the young officer they were in quest of.

"What, the young fellow they call 'Bugler Dare?'"

"Yes," replied Sir George, proudly; "he's my grandson."

"Well, he's as fine a young fellow as Her Majesty has in her service, and that bugling exploit of his at Inkermann has made him a well-known character, not only in his division, but throughout the whole force. I hope you'll find him safe and sound."

"God grant we may," said Sir George, and thanking the staff-officer for his kindness, the two old friends rode off towards the front.

* * * * *

Cold, hungry, tattered, and worn out, Charlie Dare is returning from the trenches after nearly thirty-six hours' duty in them. He and his party should have been relieved at early morn, and the reliefs had actually arrived in due time; but a threatening movement of the enemy had rendered their detention advisable until this hour in the afternoon. The jaded party is dismissed in due form, and Charlie unbuckles his sword and wends his way to his hut, the troops now being between wooden walls instead of under canvas. Charlie is out of spirits. Over-fatigue and scant rations may have something to do with robbing him of his bright, cheery manner; but neither hunger nor want of rest is the sole, nor even the chief, cause of his low spirits. He has not heard for some time from the little home in Clumberstone, and his mind is full of gloomy forebodings. The afternoon is conducive to gloom, the shades of evening are closing in, and great, heavy, black snow-clouds hang pall-like over the landscape. Before entering his hut, he takes a look round. Suddenly his gaze becomes fixed and strange, his eyes dilate, the colour fades from his cheek, then rushes back again in a crimson glow; then, with a cry of joy on his lips, he dashes forward towards two figures approaching in the dark. In another moment, Sir George Dare's arms are round him, while Jack Paynter gives vent to his feelings by pommelling Charlie in the back with one hand, and "swabbing" his eyes with the red bandana in the other.

It is some time before the three can moderate their transports. Even Sir George, generally so calm and collected, is fairly beside

himself with excitement ; and as to Charlie, he is completely dazed with surprise and delight.

"Come into the hut, and tell me all," says Charlie.

Jack Paynter refuses the invitation for the present.

"Tell him *all*, George. Don't spare me. I'll stay outside. Don't spare me, George," he says.

The story is soon told to Charlie. When he hears that astounding portion of it where the term "landlubber" is applied to old Jack Paynter, Charlie loses all control over himself, and becomes almost hysterical.

"Upon my word," he remarks, "I don't know which it makes a fellow feel most inclined to do, to cry or to laugh."

CONCLUSION.

WEEKS rolled into months, months into nearly a year, and still Sir George and Jack Paynter lingered in the Crimea. To them there was a fascination about the place—the fascination being, of course, centred in Charlie—and an interest in watching the progress of the siege, which rendered them unable to tear themselves away from the spot. Like that sentimental but bellicose young songster, who avowed his apparently useless intention of hanging his harp on a willow-tree—just about the worst tree he could have selected, considering the drooping inclination of its branches—our two old friends' "peaceful home had no charms for them, the battle-field no pain." So on they remained. Sometimes they shared a small quarter in Charlie's lines, which, owing to the courtesy and attention of Colonel Carruthers, was always at their disposal ; sometimes they were welcome guests at the English head-quarters, for Lord Raglan had not forgotten the stirring days of his youth, when he and George Dare had served together on

the Iron Duke's staff in the Peninsula; and sometimes they sojourned for a while on board ship. Old Jack Paynter had found many an old messmate amongst the senior naval officers. Sometimes the two plucky old fellows would repair to the trenches when Charlie was on duty there, and share the perils and hardships of the night with him.

In this way the time passed until September, 1855. In this month, the allied commanders determined upon a grand assault on the two most formidable works of the enemy, the Redan and the Malakhoff. As nearly every one knows, the attack on the Redan fell to our lot, while the French directed their operations against the Malakhoff. At this period of the siege, the Crimea was infested with visitors, some impelled by mere curiosity—*blasés* men about town in search of some new excitement; others in the hopes of doing some good; while there were others again who, finding the anxiety in the peaceful homes insupportable, had repaired to the scene of action, to be near the loved ones in peril. Amongst these last were many ladies.

So eager were these visitors to view the operations when anything exciting was going on, that their curiosity often outran their discretion, and their presence so close to the troops engaged was sometimes a source of embarrassment and annoyance to the generals commanding. To prevent, or rather to mitigate, this evil on the occasion of the assault on the Redan, a line of sentries and cavalry videttes was posted to keep the ground. Sir George Dare, however, and Jack Paynter were provided with written passes from head-quarters, which enabled them to go where they pleased. The assault was to commence punctually at noon, but long before that time Sir George and Jack Paynter took up a position commanding a good view of the points of attack.

"That's not the way we did business in the Peninsula," said Sir George with almost a groan, as he scanned the two earth-works through his field-glasses.

"What do you mean, George?" asked Jack Paynter, as he brought his telescope up to his eye. He despised field-glasses as only fit, he said, for ladies at the opera, and carried, instead, a ship's telescope, capable of such elongation that Jack Paynter, in the act of "sweeping the horizon," had on more than one occasion committed the impropriety of knocking off an old general's tocked hat. "What do you mean, George?" he repeated.

"Why, we should not attack that Redan at all, Jack; we should make a combined movement with our allies against that other work they call the Malakhoff, and that would be quite sufficient. With the Malakhoff in the possession of the Allies, the Russians couldn't hold the Redan even for a few hours."

"If they were two ships," grunted Jack Paynter, "I'd tell you more about it; but as they're only two mounds of earth, I don't see that there's twopence to choose between them."

"Ah, Jack," said Sir George, with a mournful shake of the head, "I'm afraid this morning's work will be a sad one for Old England, and not redound very much to her credit."

"Why, George?"

"As we rode past the regiments forming up for the attack, not half-an-hour ago, didn't you notice what boys most of them were? Half of them are fresh from the tail of the plough, some of their officers told me, and many of them have never fired a rifle in their lives. It is folly to pit such raw lads against seasoned old soldiers fighting behind earthworks."

"I'm glad Charlie's regiment is in reserve," observed Jack Paynter.

"Ah, there go the French! What gallant, active little fellows they are!" exclaimed Sir George, as the red-trousered troops suddenly leaped out of their trenches, and rushed across the open towards the embrasures of the Malakhoff, through which they scrambled in swarms, while a feeble musketry fire seemed to be the only resistance they encountered.

"They've fairly caught the Russian bear napping," said Sir

George, as in less than three minutes the French flag waved above the parapet of the Malakhoff. "Now, pray Heaven," continued Sir George, with great feeling, "that our commanders will now see the right course to be pursued. We cannot take the Redan, as the French have taken the Malakhoff, by surprise. The Russians are now on the alert, and instead of throwing our raw boys against those earthworks bristling with guns, we should reinforce our friends in the Malakhoff, and turn its guns on the Redan, which they command."

"Well, I don't know," observed that old British bull-dog, Jack Paynter. "Mossoo has taken the Malakhoff, and if we don't now go at the Redan as previously arranged, it will look as if we were shirking our work."

"Ah, Jack, as the French general said in this very campaign of another piece of mad gallant folly, '*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*' To lose more men than you need, just for the sake of appearances and a feeling of national rivalry, is not war. They evidently don't see it in that light though," continued Sir George, in melancholy accents, as just at that moment, with an English cheer, our ladder parties jumped out of the trenches, and, followed by the stormers, rushed furiously towards the Redan. "Now, Heaven fortify the hearts of those English boys!"

Well, indeed, may Sir George invoke the Divine assistance on behalf of his young countrymen in their hour of trial.

"Few, few shall part where many meet,
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet,
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre."

The English cheer was soon drowned in the mighty roar of the Russian heavy guns, which opened with a rapidity that showed how well prepared the enemy was.

"Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven
Far flashed the red artillery."

In a few moments the slopes of the Redan were strewn with bodies lying in the stillness of death, or writhing in contortions of agony. Unchecked, though sadly diminished, the ladder parties and the stormers pressed on through the murderous storm of iron until the edge of the ditch was reached. Then commenced the deadly work in right earnest. With the gallant devotion which is ever the characteristic of their order, our officers led their men through the embrasures or over the parapets right into the ranks of the Muscovites. But no amount of devotion or pluck could contend against such odds. The Russians by sheer numbers overwhelmed the handful of men who could gain a footing, and forced them over a parapet into the crowded ditch, which was being swept by a murderous cross-fire of musketry. Again and again did our men, cheered on by the officers, scramble up the parapets only to be bayoneted or shot down.

At all this Sir George Dare and Jack Paynter looked on with aching hearts.

"Jack," at last said Sir George, "I must be up and doing. There's many a poor fellow there," he said, pointing to the writhing forms on the glacis, "to whom a sip of water now would be more than all the wealth of the world. I must go to them, Jack. My canteen is full of water; give me yours, too, and you stay here."

"Not I," said Jack Paynter, shutting up his telescope with a determined snap, where you go, George, I go."

"So be it, Jack."

In a very short time the two good Samaritans were in the midst of the wounded, moistening the parched lips of one, writing down the dying message of another, and saying a prayer with a third. With a brave but aching heart, Sir George is busily performing these acts of mercy, when his gaze rests on a young ensign—a boy fresh from the school play-ground—whose life is fast ebbing away. In the dying boy's eye there is a beseeching look, and Sir George, thinking he asks for water, is by his side in an

instant ; but it is not water the young hero is thinking of. He wants to say something, and Sir George bends low to catch the faint sounds.

“How are they getting on?” he asks, turning his eyes towards the spot where the fearful din of strife is rending the air.

“They’re fighting gallantly, my brave boy,” says Sir George.

The eyes close, and a faint smile plays over the pale young face.

“Ah,” thinks Sir George, “somebody’s heart will break for this. There he lies—

“Somebody’s darling, so young and so brave,
Wearing yet on his pale, sweet face,
Soon to be hid by the dust of the grave,
The lingering light of his boyhood’s grace.”

Sir George moistens the parched, colourless lips, and once more the eyes open ; but they are dim now, and a cold sweat is on the young brow.

“Matted and damp are the curls of gold
Kissing the snow of that fair young brow ;
Pale are the lips of delicate mould ;
Somebody’s darling is dying now.”

A deep sigh, and then the form that a quarter of an hour before was in the full vigour and beauty of youth, is now a lump of clay. Tenderly Sir George performs a few last little offices.

“Back from his beautiful blue-veined brow,
Brush all the wandering waves of gold,
Cross his hands on his bosom now—
Somebody’s darling is still and cold.”

Alas ! he is not the only one. Thickly strewn around are the “darlings” of many a home, rich and poor. That young country lad on whose back they had put a coat of red shoddy, into whose hand they had shoved a rifle, and then told him to go and be shot by men he had never heard of in his life, is enshrined in some heart at home as fondly as that well-born epauletted youngster lying close by.

In the meantime the conflict rages on the parapet of the Redan, and inside the work with deadly loss to us, and the reserves are ordered up ; then, as before, down the slopes of the glacis, up which the reinforcements are pushing, tears the hurtling storm of iron and lead.

Sir George is soothing the last few moments of a dying lad with words of hope and comfort, when a deep groan escapes from his lips, and with his hand to his side and his face all colourless, he sinks to the ground.

In one moment, with a cry of horror, Jack Paynter is by his side, holding his friend's head up, and gazing into the white, suffering face with unspeakable anguish depicted in his own.

"George, are you hit?"

"Yes, Jack, badly," feebly comes from Sir George's white lips.

Jack Paynter groans in agony of spirit.

"A little water, Jack."

Sir George's wooden canteen is empty, and Jack Paynter goes to fetch his own, which he has left by the side of the wounded man he was last tending. The reinforcements are rushing on, and the ground is literally being ploughed up with shot and shell.

What a time Jack Paynter is in fetching that water!

There he comes at last, poor old Jack Paynter, dragging himself slowly along the ground, and leaving a crimson track behind him on the green sward. He is trembling from head to foot with faintness and agony ; he suffers a thousand deaths with each movement as he drags himself along, but he manages to hold the canteen without spilling any of those few last precious drops in it.

He reaches Sir George at last, and though he himself is suffering the most extreme pangs of thirst, he manages to hold his friend's head up, and to pour the last drop of water down his throat. Then with a groan his head droops over his bosom. For a moment Sir George gains a little strength.

"Jack," he says, "are *you* hit, too?"

"Aye, George," faintly replies Jack Paynter as he sinks back unconscious.

"So, dear faithful old friend, we shall go together," murmurs Sir George. "Would to God I could see my boy once more."

It seems as if his prayer is at once heard. A fresh regiment is rushing up the slope in loose order, with arms at the trail and fixed bayonets. It is Charlie's corps. Charlie himself, fleet of foot, is distancing all of them in that wild race to death or glory, and his young face is all a-glow with excitement. Suddenly his eyes, which are bright and flashing, become fixed in a dull stare of horror, and, turning aside from the path of glory, he is in a few moments on his knees by the side of Sir George and Jack Paynter, while the regiment rushes on, leaving him behind.

Sir George feels an arm round his neck, and he revives.

"Is that you, Charlie? Thank God, my prayer that I might see you once more before I died is heard."

At this moment Jack Paynter opens his eyes, and with a smile feebly tries to lift his hand for a last shake.

Fast trickle the tears down Charlie's cheeks, as he takes the old sailor's hand in one of his, while his grandfather's head is pillowed against his shoulder.

"Great God!" exclaims the boy, passionately, "hear my prayer. Let me be struck down here near those that are dearest to me in the world."

"Good-bye, Charlie. Leave us; your place is with your regiment."

"Oh, I cannot; I will not leave you. Let them accuse me of deserting my colours; let them shoot me as a coward; I shall not leave you."

"Charlie, Charlie, the place for your father's sword is in the front. Carry it there."

"Oh, grandfather, I cannot; I cannot leave you like this."

Sir George managed to raise himself on his elbow, and pointing to the fight, said in tones which froze Charlie's blood—

"Forward, Charlie!"

"Aye, Charlie, for'ard!" came like a faint echo from old Jack.

"Oh, Uncle Jack—oh, grandfather, pity me. Let me stay with you until—until, oh God, until the last is over."

"Forward, Charlie!"

"Aye, Charlie, for'ard!"

Sobbing passionately, Charlie kisses old Jack Paynter's hand, and then pressing one last kiss on the damp cold forehead of his grandfather, he tears himself away. He has not gone twenty yards when his resolution fails him. He feels as if he must go back, and turns to do so; but there is his grandfather still pointing to the front, and though the dear tones of that voice cannot reach him, he can see that the word "Forward!" is trembling on those ashy lips.

Frenzied with grief, Charlie rushes like a madman up the slope, plunges into that deadly ditch, and in a few moments is in the Redan, in the very thick of the Russian ranks.

* * * * *

"Good God! there goes the best and bravest boy in my regiment," says Colonel Carruthers, as Charlie Dare's lifeless form is hurled over the parapet.

* * * * *

As soon as Sir George Dare loses sight of Charlie, he sinks back exhausted, and Jack Paynter lies motionless by his side. At last the latter, with that flickering of strength which so often immediately precedes death, raises himself upon his elbow, and gazes as if in search of some object.

"Let me, oh, let me," he says in gasps, "once more behold the glorious sea."

With dim eyes he looks in vain. Between the dip of two distant hills, however, there is just a little glimpse of the sea to be had, and old Jack Paynter at last catches sight of it. A smile, soft and pure as a child's, plays over his face.

"Ah—h," he says, as if refreshed, "the glorious sea!"

He keeps his eyes fixed on it for a few moments, and then falls back. His hand searches for his old friend's. "George," he says faintly.

"Good-bye, Jack, we shall meet again in a better land," is the feeble response.

There was a pause; then came the last words that those two fast old friends were ever to exchange in this world.

"I am happy, Jack. Are you, dear old friend?"

"Aye, George."

After a time, old Jack Paynter pressed the hand which lay in his, but there was no responsive pressure. George Dare's brave and gentle spirit had fled.

Then the Angel of Death warned old Jack Paynter that his last moment had come, and beckoned him aloft. With a final effort the old sailor raised himself up, cried out, "Ready, aye ready!" and fell back.

* * * *

There only now remains this much to be told. Charlie Dare, though desperately wounded by both bayonet and bullet, survived not only that assault on the Redan, but also all the subsequent perils of the campaign. He is now Sir Charles Dare, and commands one of the smartest regiments in the service. Periodically he pays a visit to the Crimea, to view the spot where those two noble hearts lie crumbling into dust.

Simpkin, the reader may like to hear, behaved with great gallantry at the assault on the Redan, and was wounded so badly as to be unfit for further military service. So ended all poor Simpkin's dreams of military renown. He is very happy now, however. He married "the girl he left behind him," and is now the rector of a snug little country parish, where Charlie Dare often turns up in the leave season.

There is another spot in old England to which Charlie Dare periodically repairs. It is the peaceful little village of Clumber-

stone, where he is regarded with a love bordering on veneration. The cottage on the hill belongs to him, and, unable to live in it himself, he has put it to the use which he feels those two noble hearts that had once beat within its walls would have most approved of. In it three old sailors and three old soldiers, all service-worn, are passing their last years in peace and comfort. Old "Bloomin' Politeful's" flag-staff still stands, and on every anniversary of the attack on the Redan the Union Jack waves from its halyards half-mast high.

A RACE FOR A LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

A FEW years ago, on a bright morning, a party of young officers were assembled at breakfast, in the mess hut of the English camp at Yokohama, in Japan. Though bent on a long day's excursion into the interior on horseback, they were all dressed in uniform. This is worthy of notice, for it is well known that it is not the habit of the British officer to take his pleasure in harness. Those officers, however, serving Her Majesty in Japan at this period, were, perforce, exceptions to this rule. Some time before the opening of this tale, two of their number, while riding in the country, had been cut down by Japanese fanatics, who had afterwards explained that had they known their victims had been soldiers, they would have let them pass in peace. The statement made by these assassins was doubtless perfectly true. In the first place, the military profession is held in the highest honour by the Japanese ; in the second, it was well known by those who understood the Japanese character, that the bigoted natives who objected to their country being opened to foreigners, entertained less personal antipathy to the foreign soldier, who was merely obeying orders, than to the merchant whose object was self-aggrandisement, at the expense of the new country. A standing order was in consequence issued from the Horse Guards, that English officers serving in Japan were never to appear out of their quarters except in uniform. The order was, of course, obeyed ; and no matter, whether snipe shooting in the adjacent

marshes of Kanasawa, or dining at some merchant's in the settlement, or dancing at a ball given by the British Minister, the officers of the Yokohama garrison always wore the garb of their profession. It was, of course, under these circumstances impossible to adhere strictly to Her Majesty's Dress Regulations, and there was a considerable relaxation of the pipeclay and stiff stock style of military toilet. To paraphrase Pope, we may say, that "Sport springs eternal in the Briton's breast." You cannot debar an English officer from all opportunities of sport, and you cannot, at the same time expect him to wade through marshes after wild fowl, or ride thirty miles at a stretch, in exactly the same dress as he wears on parade; consequently, considerable latitude was allowed him as regarded the clothing of his nether limbs, when engaged in the above and cognate pursuits.

The members of our party were dressed in a way which would have scandalized many an old pipeclay martinet at home. They wore scarlet patrol jackets, with the exception of one young artillery officer, who, of course, stuck to the blue of his corps, and white cord breeches, butcher boots, and hunting spurs completed the get-up. To judge from the laughter and the good-natured "chaff" flying about in the intervals of their pressing attentions to the good things on the breakfast table, they were evidently a very jolly lot. So they were. There were Ashton, a young captain; Barton, and one or two other jovial subs of the —th; Meredith, a young lieutenant of artillery; and little Doctor O'Flanagan, the assistant-surgeon of the regiment, who hailed, as his name should imply, from the Emerald Isle.

"And what's the name of the place we're going to to-day, Ashton?" asked little Doctor O'Flanagan, as he skilfully dissected a snipe on his plate.

"The far-famed Buddhist shrine of Daibutz, docther, me boy, the biggest idol in the world," replied Ashton, one of those public-spirited men to be found in every regiment, capital hands at arranging pic-nics, getting up balls, managing theatricals, etc.

"And what's the programme of the day?" asked Meredith.

"Coolies have gone on to Kanasawa with the grub, and we lunch at the tea-house there, then on to Daibutz," replied Ashton. "Come along, it's time to be off."

The breakfast table was speedily deserted, and final preparations before starting were made. Flasks were filled, according to the fancy of the owner, cigars lighted, and loaded revolvers, in their cases, buckled on. This last was in accordance with a strict order, that no officer was to venture a certain distance beyond the precincts of the camp without being so armed. Outside the mess hut, the *bettoes*, or native grooms, were leading their masters' ponies up and down, and in a few moments the party were mounted. There was a good deal of squealing and bucking at first, for a Japanese pony is not the most docile animal in the world. Neither is he the handsomest. But "handsome is as handsome does," and though a great many of the vices that horseflesh is heir to flourish with great virulence in his disposition, still, for a rough and tumble hard day's work, he is wonderfully good. He stands about fourteen hands high, and I have known him carry seventeen stone thirty-five miles in the day, and come in pulling hard. Altogether, then, taking everything into consideration, we may arrive at the verdict that "he is a rum un to look at, but a good un to go."

At last, every one settled quietly down in the saddle, and with a merry "whoop for'ard" from Ashton, who led the way, the party trotted through the gateway of the camp, to the intense admiration of the sentry. Merrily the party trotted along in the bright clear morning, laughing and talking at the top of their voices, the rich brogue of little Doctor O'Flanagan being particularly conspicuous. For a short distance after leaving the camp the road was sufficiently broad to admit of their riding three or four abreast, but soon they plunged into a labyrinth of narrow paths, which necessitated Indian file order. For a few miles they kept on in this way at a steady jog-trot, sometimes

through the chequered shade of some leafy dell, sometimes past the picturesque thatched farmhouses and cottages, out of which chubby children ran clapping their hands, and crying out in shrill tones, "*Tojin, Tojin!*"* and sometimes threading their somewhat precarious way along the narrow crumbling causeways intersecting the paddy-fields, as the submerged tracts of land devoted to the cultivation of rice are called. At last, they crested the summit of a small hill, and here they paused, partly to give their ponies a breath, and partly to admire the beauty of the scenery. It would be hard to find a fairer country on the face of this earth than the Land of the Rising Sun, as the Japanese call their country.

"Well," said Meredith, enthusiastically paraphrasing a popular song of the day,

" ' I've travelled about a bit in my time,
And of countries I've seen a few,
But never have witnessed in any clime
A scene so lovely, have you ? ' "

"Were you ever in Oireland ?" asked Doctor O'Flanagan.

"Yes," replied Meredith ; "were you, doctor ?"

"Yes, sorr, wanst," replied Doctor O'Flanagan, amidst a roar of laughter, in which he joined himself, with a merry twinkling eye, for the little doctor was very good-natured, and was very much liked accordingly. His reply that he had only been in Ireland once, was strictly true, inasmuch as he had never revisited his native shores since he had first left them, fresh from Trinity College, Dublin, some five or six years before. Between the doctor and the "gunner," as Meredith was always called in the Yokohama garrison, with whom he was very popular, there were frequent passages of arms, which were always much relished by admiring critics. These little interchanges of banter were always conducted with the greatest good nature on both sides.

* "*Tojin*" is the general term in Japan for all foreigners.

"It's about the best bit of country for riding over that I've seen in these parts," observed Ashton, who always looked at a country from a hunting point of view, "none of that beastly paddy——"

"Don't be so personal, Ashton," said Meredith. "Consider the doctor's feelings."

"I apologise," said Ashton, laughing. "We'll say rice-fields, then. None of those horrid rice-fields, which would pound the best field Leicestershire ever turned out. 'Pon my word, it's too tempting. I tell you what, do you see that large tree on a mound, straight ahead, about a mile and a half away?"

Everyone at once descried the object, and wanted to know what then.

"Why, what do you all say to a scurry across country, and that tree shall be the winning post. I vote we have a sweepstake. Entrance five dollars each; the winner to purchase a silver cup to commemorate the occasion, and stand 'fizz' at mess to-night."

The sporting proposition was warmly received.

"Begorra, I'm your man," said Doctor O'Flanagan. "It's a glorious opportunity for compound fracture that's not to be thrown away at all."

"And '*I'm* game,' as the pheasant said when he dropped down from his tail, by which they had hung him up in the larder," observed Meredith, who was a keen hand at anything sporting.

"So am I," said everyone else.

There was no more waste of time. Girths were looked to, stirrups taken up or let down a hole or two, bridles examined, and in a few moments all were ready for the contest.

"Will you do starter, Ashton?" asked Meredith.

"All right," was the reply. "Now, get into line, all of you."

This was easier said than done, owing to the doctor's steed, a vicious brute, choosing that inopportune moment for an unjustifiable assault with his heels upon the ribs of an adjacent pony,

and as bad behaviour is very infectious, it being a weakness of equine as well as of human nature to follow a bad example more readily than a good one, there was a general scrimmage amongst the quadrupeds, combined with much vigorous treatment on the part of the bipeds who bestrode them.

"Hang it, doctor!" said Barton, whose knee-cap had had a narrow escape, "I believe you keep that brute to provide you with interesting cases to keep your hand in."

Doctor O'Flanagan replied not to this serious charge, but vented his feelings on his charger.

"Ah! ye great vicious varmint, ye're disthroying the company, and taking your proprieter's charachter away."

Here the "vicious varmint" evidently thought he might just as well take his proprietor away as well, and accordingly bolted off homewards at top speed, with his head well between his knees, amidst derisive shouts of "Good-bye, doctor:" "No place like home;" "Tell them to have the champagne put in ice by the time we come back to-night," etc., etc.

"Not a bit of it; I'll be back with ye in a couple o' shakes," shouted back the little doctor, as he pulled and tugged at the reins until he was purple in the face.

It is impossible to say whether the doctor was as good as his word, as the exact duration of a "shake" is unknown to the writer; but at any rate, in something under ten minutes, he reappeared once more amongst his anxious friends, very much out of breath, yet still very eloquent in the application of numerous quaint and opprobrious epithets to his perverse steed.

It being evident that the blown condition of the doctor and his horse would be strongly against their chance in the coming race, the party chivalrously waited until both had recovered themselves. The ponies were now ranged into line by their riders.

"Are you all ready?" asked Ashton, who took up a position on the right of the line. "Come up, Meredith. Back, Barton. Up a little, doctor. Are you ready? Go!"

The final word was hardly out of Ashton's mouth with a clear ring, when away they all went helter-skelter. The first obstacle was a bank, which was soon left behind without any mishap. Then came a series of drops, the country just there being cultivated in terraces. The first one was fully six feet into a ploughed field, and any spectator unaccustomed to Japanese cross-country work, as performed a few years ago by our countrymen out there, would have stood aghast to have seen these half-dozen youngsters, charging the small precipice at racing pace. It is wonderful what these animals can accomplish when boldly ridden, and none of the party come to grief. The next drop, however, brings two ponies on their noses, and their riders sprawling on the ground. Luckily, it is pretty soft falling, no bones are broken, and men and horses are soon up and at it again. The last drop in the series is what Ashton calls "a plugger." It cannot be less than ten feet, with a slope of about one foot, and as Ashton, who leads, approaches it, he slackens pace a little, and allows his pony to take his own time about it. The animal gallops up to the very edge, pulls up short, tucks his hind legs under him, and half jumps, half slides down on his quarters, then picks himself together, and is off again in full swing. The whole thing is a matter of a couple of seconds. Meredith, who comes next, pursues the same tactics with his animal, and lands safely in the field below; but the little doctor, who is riding third in the race, scorns all this base caution, and hustles his steed at the drop with a "huroosh," and various other wild Irish yells. The pony, terrified out of his senses by the screaming demon on his back, is not in a frame of mind to adopt the calm and collected movements of his four-legged predecessors. He tries to fly the drop, and lands on his knees and nose; while Doctor O'Flanagan, huddled up into a little ball, describes a graceful parabolic curve through the air.

"Be——" yells the little man.

"Gorra!" he would have gone on to say; but the conclusion

of his favourite exclamation was cut short by a mouthful of Japanese mud, as he terminates the parabolic curve by ploughing the soil with his head. Through these trying circumstances, however, the doctor pluckily holds on to the reins, and is speedily on his feet again. All attempts, however, to remount are resisted by the steed, who evidently thinks he's had enough, and dances away from the doctor's advances at the extreme length of the reins. All this time, Doctor O'Flanagan's chances of winning the skurry are becoming small by degrees and hideously less. His wrath proportionately rises, and he talks to his recalcitrant steed not exactly in the language of the poet, but to no avail.

"Sure I must be civil to ye, ye great thaving baste. Whoa, then, whoa, my darlin' jewel."

The effects of these last terms of endearment were considerably lost by being spoken between the doctor's ground teeth, and the pony continued to turn a deaf ear to the blandishments of his owner. At last, by a well-executed *ruse*, Doctor O'Flanagan managed to remount, and at once followed in hot pursuit of the rest, who now seemed hopelessly ahead. As to Meredith and Ashton, they had by this time nearly reached the goal.

"Nil desperandum," mutters the little doctor, as he catches his pony well by the head, and shoves him along. "Sure, a race, like a battle, is never won until it's lost. Get on with ye!"

The doctor's perseverance is soon rewarded, as he shortly beholds, to his intense delight, the whole field pounded by a small brook. Meredith, Ashton, and the rest in vain, again and again, ride at it; but no amount of vigorous riding will induce their ponies to have anything whatever to do with it, and these repeated attempts and failures give Doctor O'Flanagan time to come up.

"Get out of the way," he bawls, "get out of the way, ye shrimpshanking spalpeens! Make way for the O'Flanagan, direct discindant on the faymale side from Brian Boru, King of Ulster. *Faugh a Ballagh!*" *

* Clear the way.

With the most fearful Irish yells ever heard out of Donnybrook Fair, the little doctor charges the brook with might and main. These very noisy tactics, which had brought him to grief at that stiff drop, now carried him safely over the obstacle. The animal, scared and bewildered by the war-cry of the O'Flanagans, takes his water jump as a child takes his powder in jam—he knows nothing about it, and just covers the brook in his stride as he speeds on in his wild career. The yells of triumph the doctor gives vent to, when he finds himself on the right side of the water, are positively appalling. I doubt whether even a bagpipe or a pig in its dying agonies could produce such notes as those with which the little doctor made the day hideous. He did not, however, have it all his own way. The lead he had given was at once followed by Meredith's pony, and then commenced, as the sporting papers say, "a regular hammer and tongs finish." Meredith was an accomplished horseman. He had ridden in many a steeplechase—sometimes with success, sometimes without, but always with pluck and judgment—at Woolwich, at Aldershot, in the Grand Military over the Rugby course, at the Curragh of Kildare, and what, in the little doctor's eyes, was of greater moment than all these put together, he had actually ridden into a place at Punchestown, in an Irishman's eyes *the* steeplechase meeting, *par excellence*, in all the world. The knowledge that such a formidable rival in the pigskin was pressing him hard incited the doctor to still greater exertions, vocal and instrumental; that is to say, he screamed more than ever an extraordinary Milesian jumble of epithets, endearing and opprobrious, and wildly plied whip and spur. In a close thing like the present, Meredith's superior riding would, without a shadow of a doubt, have carried the day; but the little doctor's arms and legs flying about to a wild accompaniment of unearthly yells, was too much for his equanimity, and, as he himself afterwards remarked, "he was laughing so that it was all he could do to hang on to his pony." The consequence was a victory for the O'Flanagan by a neck.

CHAPTER II.

THE remainder of the party, many of them bearing about their persons the traces of contact with mother earth, rapidly came up, and, amidst much hearty laughter, Doctor O'Flanagan's victory was hailed with acclamations. The little medico was in high feather, and, flushed with victory, announced his intention of putting a horse into training for Punchestown directly the regiment arrived home, and riding it himself at that far-famed cross-country meeting.

With the exception of the Tokaido—the broad highway which runs north and south the entire length of Japan—the country is entirely deficient of roads. Until very lately there were no wheeled vehicles used; articles of merchandise were carried on pack-ponies, or suspended from bamboo poles on the shoulders of coolies; people when they wished to go from one place to another either walked, or rode on horseback, or were carried in a species of palanquins, the better sort called *norimons*, the commoner description, *kangos*. Three or four years ago, an enterprising Englishman introduced a carriage something like a Hansom without the driver's seat, and with this other difference that, instead of being drawn by a horse, a couple of coolies are harnessed in the shafts. This vehicle, called in Japan, a *jinricksha*, has taken immensely with the Japanese, and in Yeddo, Osaka, and all their large towns *jinrickshas* are as plentiful as cabs are with us. But for country work the people are still, owing to the absence of roads, obliged to stick to the *norimons* and *kangos*.

Towards noon our party rode into the pretty little village of Kanasawa, picturesquely situated on the margin of a broad lagoon. At the tea-house, as the inns in Japan are called, they were met on the threshold with many cheery greetings of "*Ohio donesan*" ("How do you do, sir?") from the fat old host, his wife, and

his two daughters. They also found their *bettoes* (horse-boys) who had run by short cuts across the country, and had managed, as they always contrive to do, to reach the appointed place before their masters. These *bettoes* are strange-looking fellows. They are as a rule tattooed all over their bodies, from their necks to their ancles, with all sorts of strange devices, and as their dress usually consists, except in the depth of winter, simply of a pair of wooden clogs, a piece of cotton round their loins, and another round their heads, every facility is given for the display of the devices and patterns tattooed on their flesh. They are very handy, active, little fellows, and will keep on a steady jog-trot for hours without any signs of being distressed. While the *bettoes* led the ponies away for a rub down and a feed, their masters trooped into the tea-house for refreshment. So scrupulously clean are the Japanese regarding the interiors of their dwellings that anyone before entering a house is obliged to slip off his or her shoes, and go about on the white matting, with which all the floors are covered, in socks. This is all very easy for the people of the country, as they wear nothing but wooden clogs in wet weather, and straw sandals in fine, both of which are easily slipped off; but to a European, or an American, or any other leather-booted biped, the custom is not so easily complied with. The tea-house at Kanasawa, however, was so much patronised by foreigners, that the host had prepared certain rooms for their reception where they could do as they liked.

The hampers containing the luncheon, which had been sent on early in the morning, were speedily unpacked, and with the assistance of the two good-natured smiling little *moosmés*,* the host's daughters, the contents were set out on a table. The morning's ride had given all a sharp appetite, and as Ashton, who had the management of the commissariat, had provided a tempting spread, there was no time lost, you may be sure, in attacking the viands.

* *Moosme* is the Japanese for girl.

During the repast Doctor O'Flanagan, who had not yet got over his victory, was in great spirits. Like many another person, the doctor had one pet story, which, whenever elated, he invariably brought out. It was something to this effect : Once on board a sailing ship the doctor was in medical charge of a small draft. A fever broke out, and every one of the combatant officers became seriously ill. In this juncture Doctor O'Flanagan assumed military command of the draft, and how he acquitted himself in this position was the basis on which he built a highly embellished and somewhat bombastic narrative. Of course, being, as I said before, in high feather, he now gave it to his hearers with even more than its usual embellishments.

"The draft belonged to a West Indian regiment, I suppose?" said Meredith, quietly.

"And whoy a West Indian regiment?" asked the doctor, cocking his little head knowingly on one side, and winking facetiously to all around him, as much as to say, Just listen and see how Thrinity, Dublin, will knock Woolwich into a cocked-hat. "And whoy a West Indian regiment, may I ask?" repeated the doctor with a chuckle.

"Well, of course, doctor," replied Meredith, "one naturally supposes it was a black draught you were in charge of."

There was a roar of laughter in which the angry splutterings of Doctor O'Flanagan were drowned.

Now Meredith was the most good-natured fellow possible, which is what cannot always be said of witty people. A person who has a reputation for wit is often tempted into sustaining it at the expense of friend as well as of foe, at the expense even of truth.

Horace seems to have had a horror of the funny man who would go to any length for the purpose of keeping up his reputation. "*Hunc tu, Romane, caveto!*" is his advice concerning him. The reader may perhaps call to mind the whole passage, which occurs in one of the poet's satires:—

“ Absentem qui rodit amicum,
Qui non defendit, alio culpante ; solutos
Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis ;
Fingere qui non visa potest ; commissa tacere
Qui nequit ; hic niger est ; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.”

Meredith was indeed a very different stamp of man. Directly he saw that Doctor O’Flanagan was angry, he at once attempted to apply a little salve to the raw.

“Come, come, doctor, take a joke as it’s meant, in perfect good nature.”

But the little doctor would not be pacified. Nothing that Meredith and the rest could do or say could win him back to his normal condition of good nature. His pet anecdote had been ruined, and for the remainder of the lunch he indulged in sundry bellicose references to what his forefathers would have done under similar circumstances “at twelve paces.”

As the party emerged from the tea-house for the purpose of remounting their ponies and proceeding on their journey, they observed standing on the opposite side of the way a couple of two-sworded Japanese. The privilege of wearing two swords is accorded only to military officers above a certain rank, and government officials who are termed *yakonins*. These *yakonins* are as a rule very smartly dressed and accoutred. But the two men, who stood watching the party with anything but friendly looks were far from being smart, though they each wore the two swords exclusively the privilege of the *yakonin* class. Their heads were unshaved, and their flowing robes, though of fine texture, were travel-stained and altogether decidedly the worse for wear.

There was a something about them, however, which, in spite of unshaved heads and soiled clothes, indicated that they had seen better days. As the English officers stood waiting for the *bettoes* to bring round their ponies, these two men swaggered across the road, brushed past the *Tojins* with contemptuous gestures, and seating themselves on a bench outside the tea-house, called for

saki, a spirit distilled from rice, and which may be termed the national drink of Japan. The new customers were evidently far from being welcome guests. The peaceful villagers, who had been sitting basking in the sun, sheered off, and eyed them askance; while the two little *moosmés*, generally so smiling and attentive to the visitors, looked half-scared, half-sulky. The two strangers' wants were attended to with an alacrity which was due more to fear than to civility; and as they sipped their *saki*, they indulged in remarks unmistakably directed at the Englishmen. Occasionally they burst into jeering laughter, and altogether there was an insolence in their tone and manner which was very exasperating, and which was all the more remarkable from the fact, that the Japanese are, as a rule, distinguished above all other nations for politeness—a politeness, too, which extends to the very lowest coolie class.

"Bedad," said little Doctor O'Flanagan with a fiery glance, which was returned with interest, "I'd like to teach those two spalpeens better manners."

"Be quiet, doctor, you incorrigible little fire-eater," said Ashton. "Don't let us take any notice of them, as long, that is to say, as they confine their insolence to looks and remarks. If they interfere with us in any way, that will be a different matter; but for the present, let us treat them with utter indifference. As the senior officer of the party, I'm responsible that our orders to avoid, to the utmost of our power, any collision with the natives are carried out. Come along; here are our ponies."

As our countrymen were on the point of riding away, the old host, under pretext of saying something about the bill, approached close to Ashton, and said in a low tone, speaking, of course in his native tongue, which Ashton understood and spoke tolerably well—

"*Donesan*, without doubt they are *Ronins*."

"I thought as much," said Ashton.

"Have an eye to them, *donesan*, when you're coming back."

"Oh, they won't bother us when once we go away," said Ashton.

"I won't be sure of that. At any rate, be on your guard. They are half-drunk with *saki* now, and they'll go on drinking my *saki*, for which they'll never pay me even a *tempo** until they're half-mad, and ready for any wickedness. They know you're going to Daibutz. They must have found it out from your *bettoes*. There may be more of them about, these accursed *Ronins*! Be on your guard, *donesan*. *Syonara*."†

"*Syonara*," returned Ashton, and, with a few words of thanks to the old host, the party rode off, the little doctor devoutly hoping that there might even yet be a scrimmage.

Who and what are these *Ronins*, the reader will very naturally wish to know. Anything but respectable members of society, and far from being pleasant acquaintances to meet on a lonely road, is the reply. The national army of Japan is maintained very much on the old feudal system. The powerful territorial nobles, styled *Daimios*, have each so many armed followers, which in time of necessity they are bound to place at the disposal of the supreme ruler of the country, the Mikado. The armed retinues of some of the *Daimios* are counted by thousands. Sometimes a Daimio is disgraced, or he gets into pecuniary difficulties, which do not admit of his keeping up his position. In either case, his armed force is disbanded. Many of its members are able to enter the service of other *Daimios*; but there are always some who, on account of bad character, or owing to the ranks of the other nobles being full, are unable to renew their military engagements. Now, in Japan, the military profession is hereditary, and a Japanese who has been born to the profession of arms, and has been brought up to it from childhood, will not stoop, as he would consider it, to trade or commerce. He must live by the sword alone, and if he cannot obtain service under some Daimio, he becomes a *Ronin*; that is, a sort of roving

* A large bronze coin, worth about twopence.

† Good-bye.

highwayman, who, it would seem, out of devilment quite as much as out of greed, commits most daring depredations, and is the terror of industrious husbandmen and peaceful travellers.

In speaking of a rising country like Japan, which is following so rapidly in the footsteps of European nations, it behoves one to be careful of running into anachronism. Four or five years ago, the *Ronins* existed as I have represented them; but so many blots on her really high standard of civilization has Japan swept away within the last few years, that, for aught I know, this may be one of them, though I do not think it probable.

The *Ronins* were speedily dismissed from the minds of Ashton and his friends, and the party pushed on through a lovely country to the shrine of Daibutz. The Japanese are justly proud of their beautifully wooded hills, and every precaution is taken by the government to preserve them. Not a tree may be cut down without the leave of a magistrate, and a young one must always be planted in its place. From the remotest ages this custom has been rigidly observed, and the consequence is Japan is one of the most exquisitely wooded countries in the world.

The first thing the party saw of Daibutz was an enormous bronze head, appearing among a grove of dark cedars and cypress. About a hundred yards further was a large massive gate of carved wood and stone, and beyond that a stone pathway leading straight to the feet of the gigantic image. The party were at once surrounded by fat priests, with heads entirely shaved, who proffered their explanations of the idol. To give the reader an idea of its size, I give the following dimensions from Meredith's note-book: "Each thumb measured more than three feet in circumference; the eyes, four feet long; each ear, six feet seven inches; nose, three feet nine inches long and two feet four inches broad." The figure is represented sitting cross-legged, with its hands joined in front. It is hollow, and the interior, fitted up with gilt images of Buddhist saints, resembles a Roman Catholic chapel.

CHAPTER III.

DAIBUTZ is about the most popular idol in Japan, and is visited at different times during the year by large numbers of pilgrims. While our friends were inspecting Daibutz, several of these devotees arrived. Some of them had travelled many hundreds of miles on foot, subsisting on charity by the way (he is indeed considered a hard-hearted Japanese who turns his back on a poor pilgrim), and now, at their journey's end the sight of the great idol seemed to be ample recompense for all the hardships and fatigue they had undergone. They were dressed in white—or rather in what had been white at the start, for it is laid down that in these pilgrimages the same dress must be worn the whole way—and they wore enormous hats of wicker-work, while in their hands they carried stout pilgrim staves. Meredith and Ashton, who were the two best Japanese scholars of the party, entered into conversation with a few of the pilgrims who were more communicative than the rest; and who readily explained where they had come from, how long they had been on the journey, and how they had fared by the way. In conclusion, they were not above accepting, with many protestations of gratitude, a few *tempos* apiece. On this it was astonishing how some of the pilgrims, who had never before beheld a foreigner, and had been up to this point regarding him with particular disfavour, now came forward in the most friendly manner possible.

"These *Tojins* we have heard such terrible things about are not such bad fellows after all," was evidently the general verdict as the English officers liberally distributed a few handfuls of bronze coins, while Meredith laughingly remarked, "The cultivation of friendly intercourse with the inhabitants of the country you are quartered in, was always a standing order of the Great Duke, and there is no such appeal to the feelings as the *argumentum ad crumenam*."

Having thus established friendly relations with the natives, our countrymen sought some explanation of the advantages expected to be derived from these pilgrimages. Peace, prosperity, and good health for the future, was the reply, and in order that there might be no mistake about it, the priest would provide each pilgrim, for a consideration, with a written certificate, signed and sealed, and setting forth that the holder had duly performed the pilgrimage to, and paid his orisons at, the shrine of the great Daibutz. These pilgrims belonged, of course, to the poorer classes of Japanese. The pilgrimages of the nobles and the rich merchants are conducted in a very different style. In their case the journey is performed in *norimons*, with halts, when necessary, at comfortable tea-houses, specially and exclusively kept for the entertainment of personages of high degree, and they are attended by a large retinue of servants and followers. Sometimes these great lords even perform the pilgrimage vicariously—that is to say, pay someone else to do it for them, which is by far the most luxurious and comfortable way of doing the thing, and is probably quite as beneficial to all concerned.

The precincts about Daibutz were very beautiful. The dark shady groves and the occasional sound of a deep-toned bell tremulously floating on the still air, gave an intensely sacred character to the place. The bells in the temples of Japan are peculiarly low, sweet, and sonorous. They are very big, and are made of bronze, and instead of being struck on the inside by a clapper, a large wooden beam, which is suspended close by, is driven against the outside. The least sacred characteristics of the place were, to all appearance, the priests themselves. They were fat, sleek, jovial-looking sort of fellows, and, moreover, were very avaricious, and importuned in the most bare-faced manner for money. A considerable time was spent by our party in exploring and sketching the sacred precincts, and afterwards in reclining under the shady groves. A move homewards was then determined upon, and it was decided that the return journey,

for the sake of a change, should be through Fugisawa, about four miles from Daibutz, also celebrated for its temples. Outside the gateway they found their ponies in charge of the ubiquitous *bettoes*, and they were speedily once more in the saddle. They had not ridden more than about a mile when the path branched off in two directions, and a discussion took place as to which was the right one to follow. Doctor O'Flanagan stoutly maintained that they should turn to the left, while the remainder of the party as stoutly contended that they should go to the right.

"Come, doctor, give in," said Meredith, "you're what they call a small minority."

Now Meredith did not in the least mean anything personal, but little men are generally insulted if people don't talk of them as giants, and Doctor O'Flanagan, who thought he detected in the words "a small minority" a covert allusion to his stature, waxed very wroth, and as, in addition to the supposed *injuria spræta forma*, he was still smarting under the collapse of his pet story, he announced with great dignity his intention of taking his own line of country.

"As you please," said Ashton. "We'll meet at Philippi—at Fugisawa, I mean."

"I'll wait for you there," said Doctor O'Flanagan, "for I'm certain to arrive first."

"By the way, look out for those *Ronins*," sung out Ashton as the doctor trotted off. "Come, doctor, you had better jog along with us."

"Not I," returned Doctor O'Flanagan. "Stubbornness is the besetting sin of the Saxon, and I won't be a victim to it. Besides," added the doctor, in a bloodthirsty soliloquy, as he trotted along, and ferociously decapitated a wayside flower with his riding-cane, "it's just a scrimmage with those two-sworded swaggering gentry that I should like this minute."

Leaving the doctor to his own devices, the main party had not

proceeded very far when they met a brilliant cavalcade, consisting of a party of French officers, accompanied by a couple of *yakonins* of high rank. Nearly every branch of the French service was represented, and well represented too, for these officers were all picked men. There was an officer from each of the following corps,—staff, heavy dragoons, horse artillery of the guard, rifles, engineers, and infantry of the line; and they were all dressed in the uniform of their respective corps, the officers of the horse artillery of the guard and of the dragoons being especially resplendent. What these dashing French officers were doing riding along a Japanese country path in uniform will naturally be the question that will occur to the reader's mind, for it is well known that the French had not, like us, any troops serving in the Land of the Rising Sun. They had certainly a force of "Matelots Fusiliers," as they were called, picked sailors, landed from the ships, and quartered near Yokohama, and a fine body of men they were too; but they had no soldiers. The presence of these gaudy warriors of *la grand armée* is thus explained: A few years ago Japan, in red-hot haste for improvements, had decided upon forming an army and a navy on European principles. For this purpose she sought the best models and masters. She went to England for her navy, and this being shortly before 1870, when France was considered the first military nation in Europe, she applied to France for assistance in organizing an army. In both cases the Japanese requests were readily acceded to. England sent out able naval officers under whose directions a naval college was formed at Yeddo, and France dispatched an officer selected from each branch of her army for the instruction of the Japanese troops. These latter officers, at the time of our story, had but recently arrived in the new country, and, we need hardly add, composed the cavalcade our friends confronted. The meeting was, of course, most friendly on both sides, and there was much doffing of *kepis* and hand-shakings. There had already been many interchanges of hospitality, and

Pentente cordiale existed most harmoniously between the two sets of officers. Some of the Englishmen spoke French, and those who did not got on capitally by saying at intervals, "Wee, mossoo;" while, on the other hand, some of the French spoke English, and those who did not got on equally well with, "Yes, all ri," repeated about once in twenty seconds. In the course of conversation, some of the Frenchmen stated how they had met several *Ronins*, with faces flushed and passions inflamed with copious draughts of *saki*, who, as the *cortège* had passed, had indulged in insulting and threatening gestures, notwithstanding the presence of the two *yakonins* of rank.

"We really thought," said the French staff-officer, who spoke English with the greatest fluency, "that we should have been obliged, in self-defence, to use our revolvers; but the ruffians, as if reading our intention, sheered off, and the last we saw of them they were going at a rapid rate towards the right. If you come across them, I'd advise you to be on your guard. It would indeed be foolhardiness on their part to attack English officers." (This with true French *politesse*.) "But, maddened with drink as they are, there is no knowing what they might not attempt."

A few more minutes were occupied in conversation, and then, with much politeness on both sides, the parties bid adieux, and went their respective ways.

"Do you know," said Ashton, after a little, "I don't half like this. Those drunken, ruffianly *Ronins* are evidently in the same band to which those two fellows who were so insolent at the tea-house belong. The old host told us there were sure to be more of them in the neighbourhood; and from the direction the Frenchman told us they have taken, it is very likely they'll come across the little doctor; and if they do and are insolent, as they are sure to be, he is just the little fellow to ride bang into the lot of them with a wild 'hurroosh,' which he calls the war-cry of the O'Flanagans. I vote we do our best to get across country at once, and join him,"

"By all means," said Meredith. "The doctor's back is tremendously up with me; but he's a first-rate little fellow on the whole, and far too good to be made mince-meat of, which I believe would be his fate if he were to encounter those fellows. For'ard! come along!"

So saying, Meredith leaped his pony over a low hedge, and, followed by the remainder of the party, trotted briskly in the direction he thought would most likely lead to an interception of Doctor O'Flanagan's course. After pushing along at a steady trot for a quarter of an hour, they reached the summit of a hill where a fair view of the surrounding country could be obtained. Here the party halted, and scanned the landscape in search of the little doctor, but nothing of the diminutive officer could be detected with the naked eye. Meredith, however, carried a pair of field-glasses slung over his shoulder, and these were speedily brought into requisition. For a long time Meredith looked in vain, but at last he made out a little patch of bright colour creeping along a hill-side in the distance.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER leaving the party, Doctor O'Flanagan pursued his lonely way meeting no one in his path but an occasional peaceful villager, who always accosted him with the invariable, "*Ohio donesan! Doko maromaro?*"* ("How do you do, master? Where are you going?") A Japanese when he meets you on a country road always wants to know where you're going. Man, woman, or child it matters not which, the "*doko maromaro?*" is inevitable.

With regard to this custom, Doctor O'Flanagan had a standing joke which was to reply "*atchera, catchera.*"* Literally "thither, hither," the expression was the Japanese equivalent for "there

* The writer spells these Japanese words phonetically.

and back again," and the Doctor's joke commanded unflinching success. The Japanese peasant is one of the most simple-minded, good-tempered fellows in the world, and slow to take offence. A mild little joke goes farther with him than with any other class of persons I have ever met, and the doctor's reply always raised a burst of hearty laughter. Indeed, one old man whom he met this afternoon, carrying a bag of rice, was so tickled at the unexpected rejoinder of the *Tojin*, that he had to put his load down and have his laugh out before he could proceed on his journey. Sometimes the doctor would meet an old *okamisan* (matron) trudging along, sometimes a young *moosmé*, sometimes a child, and from each and everyone there came the usual "*doko maromaro*," evoking with similar regularity the doctor's responsive "there and back again." At this the old *okamisan* * would show her black teeth and go off cackling merrily, the *moosmé* would burst into silvery laughter, and the child would clap its hands.

"Bedad," soliloquised the little doctor, "I thought my countrymen were fond of a joke and knew how to take one, but these fellows beat 'the finest pisintry in the world' all to fits."

The doctor was quite right; of all people I ever came across, from China to Peru, I never encountered such a laughter-loving race as the lower orders of the Japanese are when in their own beautiful smiling country. Transported, however, to other climes, they seem to leave their merriment behind them. The same jocose faculty is not so noticeable in the higher classes.

Sometimes as the doctor rode past a thatched farm-house or a cottage, he would hear a cheery "*Ohio*," and on looking in the direction of the sound would catch sight of a smiling red face enveloped in a cloud of steam, and just protruding above the side of a gigantic wooden tub. This would simply mean a Japanese thoroughly enjoying his afternoon tub. This *al fresco* style of bathing is the prevailing fashion throughout the country. Outside the cottage or in the court-yard of a farm-house, there is sure to

* The Japanese women, after marriage, stain their teeth black.

be one of these tubs in which a Japanese—even down to the lowest coolie—delights to boil himself daily. The water literally does boil. A small furnace is inserted at one end of the tub, and after it has been lighted a short time and the water is about tepid, the bather gets in and sits down with the water up to his neck. The furnace is still kept burning and the water gradually boils, to the apparent delight of the occupant of the tub, who sits contentedly simmering for about half an hour or longer. When he gets out he is as red as a boiled lobster. This is a luxury within the reach of the poorest. Even the coolie after his day's work is over can command sufficient to have a boil. Of all men who earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow, the Japanese are the cleanest. I wonder how often an English labourer has a hot-bath or even a cold one !

"Bedad," said the doctor as he passed a farm-house in front of which paterfamilias, materfamilias, and two or three children sat in their respective tubs with the water bubbling merrily up to their throat, and all wanting to know at the same time where he was going, "Bedad, when you're in Japan, do as the Japanese do. A warm bath and a cheroot wouldn't be a bad way of passing half an hour in the *dolce far niente* style.

So saying the doctor was about to dismount and refresh himself in this manner, when he suddenly recollected that the delay would probably enable the rest of the party to arrive at Fugisawa before he did. That would never do, and Doctor O'Flanagan, who had been sauntering along very leisurely enjoying the beautiful scenery, quickened the pace of his pony.

He was getting over the ground gaily, when he espied two men standing in the pathway about fifty yards in front of him. A closer inspection told him they were the *Ronins* who had been so insolent at the tea-house at Kanasawa, and their manners had not undergone any improvement. They were half-drunk with *saki*, and they stood in the centre of the narrow pathway in a threatening attitude, as if intending to bar his further progress.

"Bedad," said Doctor O'Flanagan, as he pulled his pony up into a walk, "This is what may be called an awkward meeting. They mean mischief. But, begorra, it's not the likes of these two drunken blackguards that will frighten a British officer, and what's more, a direct discindant in the faymale line from Brian Boru, King of Ulster. I'll soon stop their swaggering bounce if they attempt to interfere with me."

So saying, the plucky little doctor felt for his revolver, intending to advance with it in his hand ready to shoot down the first man who laid his hand on the hilt of his sword.

It must be here explained that amongst the Japanese, one of the deadliest cuts of these great swords is an upward one delivered in the act of drawing, and consequently the very action of a person in a quarrel placing his hand on the hilt of his sword and showing the least glimmer of blade, is considered by the law an overt act of hostility. If you meet an armed Japanese, and, combined with threatening words and gestures towards you, he draws so much as an inch of blade from the scabbard, you are empowered by the law of the land to shoot him down or use any other means of self-defence that lies in your power.

Doctor O'Flanagan was perfectly cognisant of all this, and he prepared to draw his revolver from its case. To his intense dismay he found the leather case empty. His revolver had no doubt dropped out during that mad skurry across country, most probably at that point where he had come to grief over the drop.

"Tare an 'oun's!" exclaimed Doctor O'Flanagan. "Things look mighty ugly. I can't be expected to go at these great two-handed swords with my bare fists. There are times when the British Infantry must retire for strategical purposes, and this is one of them."

With this the doctor turned his pony's head in the direction whence he had come, but only to see his retreat cut off by a third two-sworded Japanese—evidently a bird of a feather with the

other two, and a *Ronin*—who stood in the narrow path with the voluminous sleeve of his right arm thrown back ready for a draw.

"Begorra," said the doctor, "I'm in a regular trap. Things look uglier than ever. It's better, however, to ride at the one than at two. Here goes." So saying, Doctor O'Flanagan was about to put the plan into immediate execution, but a moment's further consideration proved to him the futility of his riding unarmed at a man wielding with dexterity—for all these *Ronins* are expert swordsmen—one of those deadly weapons. In the first place the pony would never have faced the opponent, or if he had, by dint of persuasion with whip and spur, the first cut would have disabled him, and then the doctor would be completely at the mercy of the assailant, and precious little mercy would there be, to judge from the scowl of fanatical hatred on the semi-drunken countenance.

"No, that will never do, we must make a flank movement," said Doctor O'Flanagan.

On one side of the path was a paddy-field, which, as I have already explained, is a submerged tract of land devoted to the cultivation of rice. Retreat in this direction was, of course, impossible. The doctor would at once have hopelessly stuck in the mud.

"Bother that paddy!" he said. Then, changing his tone to one of reproach, he exclaimed, "Ah! Paddy, sure you've turned traitor."

On the other side of the path, separating it from some adjoining fields, was a low hedge, and at this the doctor turned his horse's head.

There are few horses, least of all one of the Japanese breed—which will go off a road over a fence in cold blood, and in this case the difficulty was increased by the narrowness of the path, which did not admit of any run at the jump. In vain did Doctor O'Flanagan, with whip and spur, try to get his pony over the obstacle, while the three Japanese looked on his futile efforts

with jeers and abuse. They evidently seemed to be enjoying his attempts to get out of the fix, and were, to all appearances, so certain of their victim that they could afford to devote a little time to playing him for their amusement, as a cat does a mouse.

A change of tactics was necessary, and the doctor determined upon riding straight at the single Japanese.

"Oh, if I had only a bit of a shillelagh in my hand, I'd have a chance then!" was his exclamation.

Luckily, however, he caught sight of a long stout bamboo stake in the hedge close by, and in a moment, with a cry of pleasure, it was uprooted and in his hands. The little man's spirits now rose wonderfully with the acquisition of this weapon, rough and harmless as it was compared with the long razor-edged swords which would soon be flashing murderously from their scabbards.

"Bedad, I'll do them yet, or at all events, I'll break a head or two before they do me."

His preparations now became rather mysterious. He whipped off his patrol jacket, and hung it over his horse's head, fastening it by the sleeves to the head-stall.

"There, my darlint, that's a new sort of a veil for you," said the doctor, who was evidently well pleased with his device. "Now you'll face that scoundrel; for, bedad, it's not much you'll see of him to frighten you."

Not another moment was to be lost, for the two Japanese, divining his intention, were running up, with swords drawn, to the assistance of their fellow-ruffian.

Holding his horse well by the head, and with the bamboo couched in rest, like a lance, the doctor dashed the spurs in, and charged full tilt towards the *Ronin*.

"Ould Ireland for ever!" was the plucky little doctor's war-cry, as he leaned forward in his saddle, and took a tight grip of the horse with his knees.

Out flashed the long blade from its sheath, but before it could do its murderous work the bamboo lance caught the Japanese just under the throat, and, with the momentum given it by horse

and man, hurled him to the ground, where he lay stunned, while his long sword fell from his grasp. Unfortunately, however, the would-be murderer fell under the horse's feet, and with a crash horse and rider came to the ground. Luckily, the latter was not hurt, and there was just time to extricate himself from his fallen steed, and secure the long sword lying on the ground, and also the shorter one, which he took from the stunned *Ronin's* girdle, before the other two assailants were all but upon him. At the foremost one he hurled the short sword with all his might, and had the satisfaction of seeing it take serious, if not deadly effect. The hilt of the strange missile hit the Japanese on the brow, and in one second he was blinded with blood.

"*Stannero, baca Tonjin!*"* shouted the other, as he rushed on with uplifted sword.

"See you blowed first," replied the little doctor, in words which though from one point of view were heroic, from another were very much the reverse, as he guarded a furious cut, and engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand encounter.

For some moments there was a great deal of cutting and guarding on both sides with no effect, but at last a savage cut from the *Ronin* glanced off the doctor's guard, and inflicted a flesh wound on his shoulder. The crimson flood speedily dyed the white shirt in which the doctor fought, but with an undaunted heart he continued the fierce struggle for life. The loss of blood, however, soon began to tell upon him, and he was able to do little more than act on the defensive. Feeling himself getting fainter and fainter, he gradually retreated, and placed his back against a tree.

"It's all up with me," thought the doctor, as his efforts to ward off the furious cuts grew feebler and feebler. But still he managed to keep his assailant from breaking down his guard.

At about this critical juncture, the Japanese who had been struck by the short sword on the forehead, and had been all this

* Kow-tow, give in, bow down (anything of that sort), you accursed foreigner,



A Race for a Life.—p. 125

time engaged in wiping the blood away as it poured over his eyes, advanced with uplifted sword to join in the onslaught.

"I'm booked," said the doctor. "They'll make short work of me now, but I'll die game."

It indeed seemed as if no human interposition could now save him, when a shout of "Well done, doctor! keep them off a couple more moments, and I'll be with you," rung through the air.

"Hurroosh!" responded the gallant little man, with an Irish cheer.

For a moment, the Japanese, who had been pressing the doctor sorely, looked in the direction of the sound, and O'Flanagan, with new life in him, took advantage of the temporary distraction, and disabled his adversary's right arm with a well delivered cut. To do the Japanese justice, however, he possessed the one virtue of valour, and he continued the attack left-handed, while his comrade pressed forward. The cry of succour which had seemed to staunch the brave Irishman's wound, and to give him new strength, proceeded from Meredith, who, from a distance had, with the remainder of the party descried the doctor in his peril. Not a moment was lost, and all at once started off in a hard race to see who should be the first to get to his rescue.

Never had Meredith ridden in so valuable a race as this. There was no gold vase or cup, no money stakes, no applause of thousands on a crowded race-course, no increase of his reputation as a horseman to be gained. The prize was a human life in deadly peril. The race was a race for a life. And right well he rode. One after another, fence and ditch were cleared, as every stride of his horse increased his lead in the thrilling race, and took him nearer to the rescue. As he neared the last fence, the low hedge, he drew his revolver from its leather case, and as his horse alighted after clearing the jump, two reports rung through the air in quick succession, and Doctor O'Flanagan was saved, while his assailants lay weltering in their blood. In a moment, Meredith was off his horse, with O'Flanagan's hand grasped in his.

"Thank God, dear little doctor, I was in time."

"Thank God for sending me a deliverer like you, Meredith, was Doctor O'Flanagan's hearty response.

"If I had been too late," said Meredith, "the recollection that we had parted not quite the cordial friends we have been, would have always been a painful reflection for me."

"Sure, me dear boy," said the doctor, "as old Ireland's immortal bard says,

" 'And does not a meeting like this make amends? ' "

"Quite right, doctor, it does," said Meredith, smiling.

"Bedad, Meredith, you were keeping up your reputation for riding to hounds. You were nearly in at the death."

At this moment Ashton arrived on the scene ; then another and another turned up in quick succession, and the doctor was surrounded by his friends, all shaking his hand, and telling him, in hearty manly words, the delight that was in their hearts over his deliverance.

"Now, it's time to look after the wounded," said the doctor, as he proceeded, though faint with loss of blood himself, to examine the prostrate Japanese.

"Yes, but we'll begin with yourself, my dear fellow," said Ashton, who at once proceeded to tear his shirt up into strips, and to bind the doctor's arm up. The Japanese, with a merciful charity they but ill deserved, then received every attention, and our friends proceeded to Fugisawa. Here, Doctor O'Flanagan became too faint from loss of blood, to ride the remainder of the distance home, and a *kango* was obtained for his conveyance to the English camp.

He speedily recovered, and is still as popular as ever in the service. After mess, he is very fond of recounting the adventures of that day's jaunt in the Land of the Rising Sun, and the distinction of being the hero of the day he confers on Meredith, though he himself may well share that honour with his gallant deliverer.

A ROUGH CRUISE IN SMOOTH WATERS.

THE *Sylph* was a small cutter-yacht of about twenty-five tons, and the work before her on a certain calm summer evening, some years ago, was to carry four of us, beside her crew, on a six weeks' cruise from Corfu up the Adriatic Sea, along the Albanian and Dalmatian coasts. Our intention at starting was to work up as far as Trieste, a distance of about six hundred miles, and to return down the Italian coast. Our crew consisted of three Italians, two men and a small boy, viz., Nicolo, Francesco, and Piccolo. Nicolo was the captain, Francesco was first officer, able-bodied seaman, and cook, all in one; while the nautical duties of the small boy, *Piccolo* ("Little 'un," as it would be in English), were mainly in connection with the *trinkatina*, or jib, in the very frequent nautical manœuvre known as "going about." In addition to these duties, the three readily undertook and performed manifold "ultra-marine" services, as they might be called.

It might appear that we were rather short-handed, considering the squally nature of the sea we were about to navigate; but we ourselves were willing and able to take a turn at the tiller, or lend a hand to shorten sail whenever necessary. We were not mere passengers. How much greater was our interest in the course of our little ship, when we ourselves were assisting to shape and control that course. Work, even hard, rough, wearing work,

when it is out of the usual groove, often becomes play ; and we were four soldiers playing at sailors—not epauletted sailors, but bare-footed, rope-hauling toilers of the sea. To those in rude health, as we were, “roughing it” for a certain period is one of the pleasantest conditions in existence. On this principle we toiled at our “sweeps” under a burning sun like galley-slaves, and hauled at ropes until our hands were blistered ; and tarred ourselves, and narrowly escaped watery graves, and still more unpleasant tombs in the interiors of sharks, with infinite zest and enjoyment.

Our preparations were of the simplest nature ; our wardrobes are barely worth alluding to. Of course there were a few shore-going suits stowed away ; but when on board, we discarded shoes and socks, and as many other articles of clothing as possible. A flannel shirt and a pair of flannel trousers was the usual “get up,” if that phrase can be applied to a costume which requires so little getting up. As regards the inner man, our larder contained but few delicacies. We depended upon the villages along the coast for our supplies of fowls, eggs, rye bread, etc. ; and if we wanted fish, we were amply provided on board with the means of catching them. Our cellar was stocked principally with a rough, wholesome country wine (*krassi-marro*), capable of being made into a capital substitute for claret-cup. Cheap this wine was, but nasty it most decidedly was not, though the name of “black-strap,” by which it was known amongst the English in those parts, was certainly not a nice one. It deserved better of our countrymen. However, “what’s in a name?” Of other liquors there were plenty and to spare on board ; but “*krassi-marro*,” except when some consul or local magnate paid the *Sylph* a visit, was our beverage.

The accommodation of the *Sylph* was hardly equal to four passengers, and it certainly was a “precious tight fit ;” but the general *camaraderie* of a happy regiment knit the four of us together in close but elastic bonds, and we had reached that

point of intimacy when there was little fear of familiarity breeding contempt or quarrel. It was not the first time, by many, that our party had roughed it together. On the plains of Thessaly, in many a shooting excursion amongst the Albanian hills, in previous yachting cruises, under canvas, and in quarters, we had learned "to give and take," that all-important lesson in the art of "pulling well together."

The two seniors of the party, Durant and Righton, occupied the main cabin; while Carrington and myself, two young ensigns, doubled up together in the after compartment, where there was just room for two berths, and a space between to admit of getting into and out of them.

Nicolo, our skipper, was a laughing, good-looking Italian, and a first-rate practical sailor. Piccolo, in addition to his other duties, might be looked upon as a safety-valve for Francesco's feelings. Even for a warm-blooded son of the South, Francesco was excitable and peppery, and in moments of extreme emotion he would experience much relief by falling upon Piccolo, and cuffing him. Nicolo was invariably the cause of these little ebullitions. He was passionately fond of chaffing Francesco, who was too excitable for repartee, and who, when smarting under the shafts of Nicolo's wit, would rush at the miserable Piccolo, and box his ears for laughing. We would always have interfered to save Piccolo from such undeserved chastisement; but as we believed that at these moments it was an absolute necessity that Francesco should hit somebody, we thought he had better hit Piccolo, who would not retaliate, than Nicolo, who would. Besides, Piccolo did not really seem to mind it very much. He whimpered for a few moments as he rubbed his little close-shaved bullet head, and five minutes afterwards was again grinning from ear to ear, and provoking another attack. He bore no malice, and at times he and Francesco were to be seen laughing cheerily over a game of *cinque*, as if no cloud ever passed over their friendship.

The drums and fifes of some regiment in the garrison were merrily playing "tattoo" on the Corfu esplanade, as we worked the *Sylph*, by means of her sweeps, into the outer harbour. We soon were clear of the shelter of the citadel, and a gentle summer zephyr relieved us of the fatigue of sweeping. In a few minutes we were borne slowly past the eastern point of Vido, a small island in the centre of the harbour, bristling with fortifications which had cost half a million of English money, and which, within a year afterwards, on the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece, were blown into the air.

After clearing Vido, we stood over towards the Albanian coast, which at this point is not more than about eight miles from Corfu. The moon lit up the well-known landscape, and discovered to us many a familiar point along the coast line. Though, from the deck of the *Sylph*, no openings could be seen in the mountain chain, which appeared to rise sheer from the water, we knew that along that bold, inaccessible-looking seaboard were many land-locked little harbours, where, during the winter months, the *Sylph* was wont to lie, while her party beat the surrounding coverts for wild boar and deer, for woodcock, or bustard, or snipe. On our starboard quarter, was Pagneà, whence many a time the *Sylph* had triumphantly sailed homeward with a brave show of wild boar and deer lashed to her shrouds, and her lighter rigging as full of feathered game as a dealer's shop in Leadenhall Market. On our starboard bow, where the land lay low, were the marshes of Butrinto, as rife with fever and ague as with snipe and wild duck. Many a sportsman has had reason to rue a visit to the marshes of Butrinto.

We had ample time for observing these points of interest, for the wind, which had hardly deserved the name at all, died away to nothing, and left the *Sylph* drifting without any steerage way on her. First, she pointed her nose to Butrinto, then to Pagneà, then to some other well-known little port, as if mutely asking why

one or other of these happy hunting grounds was not her destination. As to the little dingy astern, which, naturally, had a still closer acquaintance with the creeks and coves on the opposite coast, she twisted and turned about at the extremity of her painter in an agony of indecision and bewilderment. Under the circumstances, sleep was the best course ; and leaving the deck to Nicolo and Francesco, who had spent the greater part of the afternoon in *siesta*, we turned in. "Gentle sleep" speedily came "to the eyes that were weary," but our slumbers were soon broken by the excitable Francesco, who, some time before dawn, made night as hideous as himself, and that is stigmatizing the din in pretty round terms.

"*Compatrioti-i-i !*" screamed Francesco at the top of his voice, not a particularly melodious one for a son of the Land of Song.

Then there were responsive shouts in the distance, drowned by more "*compatrioti-i-i !*" from Francesco, and a few "*vivas*" and "*buon' voyagios*," etc.

All this tumult ought to have meant a great deal ; but on popping our heads above the hatches, we ascertained it simply signified that a small country boat, laden with wine, was passing us on her way to the town of Corfu, about as common an object on that coast as an omnibus in the Strand. I think the nature of her cargo must have had something to do with Francesco's excitement. It was not patriotism that was the matter with him, for her crew were Greeks, and not compatriots at all, though he called them so. He was very anxious to board the stranger in the dingy ; but we bade him, in sharp tones, to moderate his transports, and to allow the *trabaculo*, or country boat, to proceed on her course unmolested. He was very penitent, and protested that he would not have shouted so loud had not the volume and depth of our snores led him to believe that nothing could awaken us until our sleep had run its due course. An accusation of snoring is nearly as serious and irritating an aspersion on your character as to be told by your hairdresser that your hair is getting

thin on the top, or by your tailor that you measure a trifle more round the chest than you used to ! and we told Francesco, with considerable asperity, to mind his own business. We then turned in again, each with the intention of proving to himself, by listening for a little, that it had been the other three who had called forth Francesco's slighting remarks. A simultaneous quartette frustrated us all.

At about six o'clock in the morning, the heeling over of the little vessel and the gurgling rush of water along her side, within an inch or two of our ears as we lay in our berths, told us that there was some wind at last, and we were speedily on deck, in hopes of finding it from a favourable quarter. We were disappointed. We found ourselves beating against a fresh head-wind off Santa Quaranta, which was not more than twenty miles from our starting point. It was weary work this beating. A short tack in which we gained a very little, and a long tack in which we lost a great deal, was not encouraging, and we determined to run into the bay of Santa Quaranta, and wait for a favourable slant of wind. We knew what a godsend our visit would be to the consul, who particularly at this non-shooting season, seldom looked on any face but that of an Albanian, and compassion for our countryman in his solitude had a great deal to do with our determination. While carrying our friendly design into effect, we all but brought our voyage to a sudden conclusion. In entering the bay, the poor little *Sylph* narrowly escaped impalement on the mainmast of a sunken brig, which had foundered a few days before. We actually sailed through between her mizen and her main, the latter of which was only two or three feet below water. Our first act, after anchoring off the Consulate, was to dispatch Piccolo in the dingy with a note to the consul, asking him to come off and breakfast ; and in the meanwhile we jumped overboard, and had a swim in three fathoms of clear water. We were completing our toilets on deck when the consul made his appearance in the dingy, only too delighted, poor fellow, of the opportunity of con

versing with a few fellow-countrymen in his own station of life. We breakfasted on deck, and afterwards accompanied the consul ashore for a stroll. A squalid little Albanian village, wretched-looking little tenements, with rickety staircases outside, dogs, dirt, fleas, a pervading odour of garlic and tobacco, with occasional whiffs, suggesting total absence of drainage, a flag-staff with a tattered Union Jack in front of the least rickety-looking house, a background of barren sun-scorched mountains, a beautiful deep blue bay in the foreground, and there you have Santa Quaranta. After a couple of hours, the wind seemed to veer round a few points in our favour, and we determined upon putting out again. The consul was very anxious for us to stay the day; but Santa Quaranta and its neighbourhood for many miles was beaten ground to us, and we sighed for fresher and greener pastures.

Once more in the open, we were able to make but little way. Beat, beat, beat, until we had "*Piccolo, trinkatina!*" *ad nauseam*. All through the day this continued, and sunset saw us no farther than fifteen miles from Santa Quaranta. We would now have run into some bay for the night, but the coast line here was iron-bound, and we looked in vain for some hospitable opening inviting us to enter. We hauled the dingy inboard, and made all snug for the night. With darkness it came on very squally, and

nasty lumpy sea got up. There was work for all hands on board that night, and more than once above the howling of the wind and the raging of the waters Francesco's voice was heard promising fabulous numbers of candles to his patron saint. Towards daybreak it was less squally, and the wind settled down into a regular stiff gale from the north, raising up a sea through which the little *Sylph* plunged heavily. It was the same wind Horace so often alludes to, "than which," he says, "there is not a more absolute controller of the Adriatic, either to raise or assuage its waves at will." It was our misfortune to experience it in the former mood. To make use of the Latin poet's own well-known expression, I do not think that oak and threefold brass

surrounded his heart, when at sea. He seems to have had a wholesome dread of the elements in general, and of the Adriatic Sea in particular. He never mentions the latter without an opprobrious epithet—*turbidus, inquietus, improbus*, etc. He maligns it. The Adriatic, though subject to occasional gales (as we could testify) and frequent squalls which come roaring down the gorges of the Albanian and Dalmatian mountains, is, as seas go, a smooth one, and the title of this yarn is no misnomer. At about nine o'clock A.M. we sprung our topmast, and about an hour afterwards, the weather getting worse and worse, we ran for shelter into a bay which turned out to be a most charming little harbour of refuge. The way in which Nicolo took us in reflected credit on his practical seamanship and nerve. Mario used sometimes to amuse his intimate friends by delineating on his expressive face the aspect of the heavens as a storm gathered, burst, and subsided. As I watched Nicolo's face on this occasion, I was reminded of this faculty of the great tenor. The Storm Fiend, as if enraged at the prospect of our escape, put forth all his fury in what seemed to be a last effort to crush us before we were out of his reach, and as we tore before the blast through a narrow channel, in which the confined waters were churned up into foam, Nicolo's brow became knit. Blacker and blacker grew his face as the channel seemed, after all, merely a marine *cul de sac*, leading no farther than the wave-worn base of the opposite crags. Something in the conformation of the hills had led Nicolo to believe in the existence of a bay deep set amongst them. But he might have been mistaken. It really looked as if he had been, and blacker still grew his brow as he grasped the tiller and strove to pierce the mist of spray which dashed continually over our bows. The look-out was at its blackest, and Nicolo's face was dark as night, when, gradually, a light seemed to break over it; the brow relaxed, the lips parted; then, in a few moments down went the helm hard, and as we swept round a rocky projection, almost on our beam ends, Nicolo's brown good-looking face broke into a

sunny smile. In a moment we were out of the wind's reach, and the *Sylph* righted, but with the way she had on her, we slipped through the water on an even keel, to the snug spot Nicolo chose as an anchorage, in as fair a haven as ever gladdened the soul of tempest-tossed mariner. The transition from storm to calm was almost too sudden for realisation. The little bay we were in was completely sheltered by high hills. Above our heads the clouds were scudding wildly before the gale, while under our feet the *Sylph* lay motionless on the unruffled bosom of the water. After our morning bath—a jump overboard—and some of Francesco's excellent coffee, we went ashore, and not very sorry were we to find ourselves again on *terra firma*. It was a charming spot with sweet-scented oleanders in full bloom, growing close down to the water's edge, and so enticing was it, that we shouted out to Nicolo to send Piccolo off in the dingy with some rugs and a tarpaulin. Spreading them on a grassy bank, we lay down and recuperated ourselves after the night's work with refreshing slumber until luncheon time—an example probably followed by those on board. When we awoke, so loth were we to leave our sylvan retreat, that we again hailed the yacht and made Francesco and Piccolo bring off our lunch. After having done justice to our *al fresco* meal we followed the course of a stream—swollen after the night's storm into a rapid torrent—for three or four miles up a rich and picturesque valley. There were no signs whatever of cultivation, and we saw but one individual, a miserable goatherd, clad in sheepskin, who was so scared at our appearance that he left his goats and made off into the woods.

The gale lasted the whole day, and late in the afternoon two Italian ships, a barque and a hermaphrodite brig, ran in for shelter, guided to the haven, as we afterwards learned, by the sight of our mast and burgee which just overtopped the little promontory forming a natural breakwater. They were laden, as well as I recollect, with currants from Zante. For something to do, we boarded them both. The captain of the barque

was a very pleasant fellow, but the captain of the brig, I regret to say, we found somewhat under the influence of liquor. The former we asked to come on board us in the evening, an invitation we did not deem it advisable to extend to the latter. Both of them, however, turned up, and the weather being tolerably clear, we sat on deck, and had a pleasant evening. The captain of the barque told us that, though having sailed these seas from boyhood, he had no knowledge of such a bay, and that it was only from seeing our mast that he had concluded there must be a harbour of some kind, and had determined to run for it, his ship straining very much, and his cargo being of a very perishable nature. The brig followed his lead. The captain of the latter, though still three sheets in the wind, was not in the least objectionable in his behaviour. On the contrary, he was one of the most polite men I ever beheld, though his politeness was entirely pantomimic. He never opened his mouth except to let out smoke or take in rum and water, but, with unfailing regularity, he bowed all round to us and waved his hand gracefully, at intervals of about a minute, all through the visit. In polite action he was a Frenchman, or, better still, a Japanese in his native country. In silent stolidity, he was a Briton with the chill on. And this was Francesco's countryman—Francesco, who was for'ard grinning and clawing Nicolo's head in an ecstasy of excitement at beholding the entertainment of his *compatrioti*. Our guests left us about ten o'clock, in their respective boats. The polite captain of the brig stood up in *his* to give us a low farewell bow, but he suddenly disappeared from our gaze as the boat shoved off, and we saw nothing more of him except a transitory view of the toes of his shoes above the gunwale. He was accompanied by Francesco, who asked leave to see his compatriot home and to stay an hour on board his ship with the crew. They evidently had a convivial evening, for we could hear them singing lustily—Francesco's nasal tones being particularly distinguishable.

Punctually at the expiration of his hour's leave Francesco re-

turned, his normal flavour of garlic delicately tempered with the aroma of rum. He was very talkative, and his loquacity assumed a pot-valiant form. He extremely regretted that it had not blown harder during the day, and that the entrance to our little harbour had not been ten times more intricate, as, under these circumstances, he himself would have taken the helm from Nicolo, and treated us to an unparalleled exhibition of seamanship. On this we reminded him of the numerous candles he had promised the previous night, and asked how he meant to pay for them. Francesco suddenly remembered that it was time to go to bed.

The night was very calm, and, after the "Italian opera" was over, very still. We sat on deck until the small hours, smoking many calumets of peace, and spinning many yarns. The soft land breeze, which had taken the place of the blustering northern gale, was balmy with the perfume of oleanders, and the night was melodious with the continuous tinkle of goat-bells. The rocks close to the water's edge were crowded with goats, from which fact we concluded that our shy goatherd of the afternoon had come down to the shore to reconnoitre, and was probably now squatted on some rock, gazing in wonderment on the unwonted sight of these ships lying in the quiet little creek.

The following morning broke in true Mediterranean livery of azure blue and gold, and, after the usual dip overboard, and breakfast, we crept out of our snug little harbour, which, by the way, for want of a name, we entered in our log as "Oleander Bay." As we passed the Italian vessels, which were both weighing anchor, they dipped their colours, and Piccolo, who was signal midshipman, responded in due form. Once outside, the *Sylph* spread all her canvas to the favourable breeze, and we bounded gaily past headland and bay. Unfortunately this pleasant state of affairs was of short duration. After a couple of hours the wind fell to a dead calm, and for the remainder of the day the *Sylph's* progress might have been reckoned by yards rather than knots. Towards evening a cat's-paw every now and again gave us a little

assistance, but even these friendly puffs deserted us. In this state of affairs, an enticing little bay, with a sandy beach and a wooded margin invited us to enter, and in about an hour, by towing the *Sylph* with the dingy, and working at the sweeps, we were snugly at anchor. After breakfast the next morning, we went ashore, and, through the medium of the magic dollar and a few presents of powder, soon established friendly relations with the natives. Nothing wins the heart of an Albanian like a few charges of gunpowder, for which he will importune in the most barefaced manner. For a couple of dollars we got several fowls, some fresh eggs, and some maize bread—very black, but very sweet. The inhabitants were very communicative, and told us the name of the place was Kiparo. There was something in connection with Kiparo which they were so anxious to tell us, that they all spoke at once, in an almost unintelligible jargon of modern Greek and Venetian Italian. Kiparo had evidently some tradition it was proud of. After great difficulty we succeeded in learning that it had been the scene of the last act of piracy in these waters, and that the tiny waves in the bay now sparkling in the sunshine had once been crimsoned with innocent blood, shed in brutal lust of gain. It was satisfactory to learn that retribution was speedy. An English man-o'-war happening to pass at the time sent in a couple of boats' crews, seized the booty, and burnt the pirate's vessels, the crews of which unfortunately escaped up the country. Kiparo had also other points of interest. About two miles inland, they told us, was a cave where pigeons dwelt in thousands, and a few miles towards a place called Porto Palermo, were the ruins of a fort. I am bound to confess that gastronomic considerations entirely outweighed the attractions of archæological research. Seductive visions of pigeon pie determined us to go and shoot the pigeons first, and examine the interesting ruins afterwards. To save time we told Nicolo to take the yacht with Francesco and Piccolo round to Porto Palermo, where we should join her in the evening. The reports concerning the pigeons were not exagger-

rated, and we shot enough birds to keep ourselves and our Albanian friends who accompanied us, in pigeon-pie for a week. We did not penetrate any distance into the interior. The broiling sun and the barren hill-sides, without shade enough to shelter a grasshopper, were too much for us, and we struck off for Porto Palermo. On our way thither we did the ruined fort. Embedded amongst the crumbling battlements, and overgrown with moss and lichen, we discovered an old gun of heavy calibre, close to the muzzle of which an ancient goat was browsing.

Righton was an artist. "Is not this," he said, as he semaphorically waved one hand in the direction of the goat and the gun, and the other towards the blue expanse of water, "Is not this a vivid reproduction of a well-known painting? Here we have Landseer's beautiful picture of Peace in an Albanian garb, so to speak. Instead of the playful lamb peering fearlessly into the now useless engine of carnage and destruction, whose occupation is happily gone, we have — Oh, confound you, you brute! What sharp horns you have got! I'll give it to you, you beast!"

Righton said nothing more about Peace, but at once tackled the goat in a fierce spirit of retaliation. How delusive these pictures of peace often are! Righton was so hotly pressed that a combination of our forces was necessary. We eventually beat the enemy off the field, though, in justice to a brave but vanquished foe, I am bound to admit that during the combat we were occasionally forced to adopt those tactics which are said to offer the tactician subsequent opportunities of distinguishing himself.

After the battle was over we examined the captured gun. Durant, who, perhaps, on the strength of wearing the order of the Medjidie, considered himself an authority on Turkish calligraphy, pronounced an inscription on it to be in Turkish characters, and gave us something about Ali Pacha. A little more scraping away, however, of moss and lichen discovered a "G. R." (*Georgius Rex*), with rather more flourishes about it than usual,

but still an unmistakable "G. R." On this, Durant retired from further investigation.

We rested under the shade of some trees growing near the ruins, until the cool of the evening, and then proceeded on our way to Porto Palermo. On gaining the summit of a mountain ridge we obtained a bird's-eye view of the harbour. It was a very fine one—deep, capacious, and circular in form, and sheltered from every wind by high hills. We were very glad to make out the little *Sylph*, dwarfed to a cockle-shell by distance and contrast with the high land close under which she lay at anchor. By this time we had begun to look upon the little ship as our home, and a strong glow of cupboard-love was kindled in our hearts as we noticed the smoke rising from the tiny caboose, for'ard, where—

"We knew by the smoke that so gracefully did curl,"

Francesco was perspiringly preparing our evening meal.

We remained in Porto Palermo for the night, and the following morning commenced the day as usual by jumping overboard for a swim. As we afterwards sat on deck at breakfast, we descried the dorsal fin of a shark above the surface of the water, not fifty yards off. Then the fin disappeared, leaving a gleaming line on the water as it had cut through, and in a moment the brute was under our counter, where not a quarter of an hour before we had been disporting ourselves. I think we all experienced a momentary sensation of being crunched, and the laugh which greeted Durant's jocular remark of "Just too late, old fellow," was a little forced. The animal gave a whisk of his tail as much as to say, "Oh, bother!" and then darted off to his old position, where we could see his dorsal fin sticking up as before. A shot from a revolver, which must have grazed his fin, sent him below, but he speedily reappeared on the scene again.

Our narrow escape naturally brought to our minds a ghastly occurrence which a short time previously had taken place in the

harbour of Corfu, and which had created—and no wonder—a painful impression throughout the garrison. The 4th Regiment, I think it was, were at afternoon bathing parade, the men disporting themselves in the water, splashing about, and shouting merrily. Amongst them was a man who prided himself on his swimming, and who, instead of staying like his comrades, pretty close in shore, swam a long way out into the harbour.

“That man is going out too far, and the men have all of them been in long enough,” observed the officer in charge. “Bugler, sound the ‘Retire.’”

The bugler sounded as ordered, and those near the shore at once came out of the water and commenced dressing; but the man far out in the harbour was thoroughly enjoying himself, lying on his back, splashing the water in showers about himself, and apparently failed to hear the bugle sound. At this juncture the dorsal fin of a shark was seen above the surface, not a hundred yards to seaward of the man. The greatest excitement now prevailed amongst his comrades on shore, and some began crying out to him that there was a shark, a piece of information he evidently did not catch, from the fact of so many singing out at once.

“Silence!” shouted out the officer; “on no account let him know his danger. He’d probably become flurried and lose all power of swimming. Sound the ‘Retire,’ bugler, with the ‘Double’ after it.”

The calls were sounded, and the man at once commenced swimming homewards; but so loth was he to leave the element he evidently loved so well, that his strokes were very slow. At the same time, by order of the officer, some of the men were engaged in launching a boat, and getting it ready to put off.

“Call out to him,” said the officer, mentioning by name two or three of the men standing by him. “Call out to him as if nothing particular was the matter, to look sharp: that he won’t have any tea, or something of that sort.”

"Come on, Bill, look sharp ; yer won't have no tea if yer don't," they shouted out ; and the man quickened his pace.

By this time the boat was manned, and put off to the rescue. Simultaneously with this the swimmer seemed to divine what was the matter, and with flurried strokes, so different to his strong measured style, strove to reach his rescuers. The dorsal fin of the shark now disappeared beneath the surface, and then commenced a thrilling race, the competitors being the shark and the boat, while the goal was the unfortunate swimmer in his agony. It was "a close thing ;" but, horrible to relate, the shark was the winner. Just as the boat reached the unhappy man, and when a helping hand was actually extended towards him, the shark fastened on his victim, and a piercing shriek rang through the harbour. The men in the boat caught their miserable comrade by the arms and shoulders, and there was a regular tussle between them and the shark as to which should have him. A shark is one of the most cowardly of animals, but the taste of blood had given this one a courage not belonging to his species. The men hit him over the nose with the oar and boat-hook, but he still held on to the wretched man—"hung on to him and shook him for all the world like a bull-dog," as the men in the boat afterwards described it. At last they got him on board, but only to die in the bottom of the boat after a few convulsive struggles. I saw a sketch of the corpse taken by a brother officer of mine a few hours afterwards, as it lay in the "deadhouse," and there was a piece taken clean out of the side, just as you can imagine a bite taken out of a sandwich.

Such was the ghastly reminiscence which the event of the morning raised in our minds.

After leaving Porto Palermo nothing worthy of record happened until we reached a little island called Saseno, off Cape Linguetta. It possessed a snug little harbour on the eastern side, where we anchored, a high peak in the centre which we ascended, and some beautiful sea shells on the beach, a number of which we collected.

That sentence exhaustively disposes of Saseno. Thence we sailed across the gulf, one side of which is formed by Cape Linguetta, and anchored off Avlona. This town was the first Albanian one of any importance we had as yet visited during the trip. It boasted of a Turkish governor, or Bey, and a British vice-consul. We called upon the latter, who was a brother of the consul at Santa Quaranta, and he took us to pay our respects to the Bey. We did a pipe, a cup of coffee, and a little small talk with the great man. Then, accompanied by the consul, and preceded by his dragoman, who carried a whip with which he touched up the dogs and urchins who came in our way, we proceeded through the wretched squalid streets to the barracks, where a few companies of Turkish soldiers were quartered. These barracks were nothing more than barns, filthily dirty inside. On straw littered over the ground, dirty, slovenly soldiers were lying about, looking half stupefied with smoke. They gazed at us with dull eyes, and without the slightest attempt at rising, though one of their officers accompanied us. How different from our English barrack-rooms, where floor and table and bench are as white and spotless as fullers' earth and "elbow-grease" can make them. How different the discipline of these listless sluggards from the rules of our service, which would have sent every man springing up to attention at the sight of his officer!

With all his sloth and dirt in quarters, the Turkish soldier, however, possesses sterling qualities in the field—bravery, patience, and docility, and he has just shown us how gallantly he can fight.

Avlona was rather picturesquely situated, but, like all Albanian villages and towns in summer-time, it appealed more to the olfactory than to the visual sense. The houses were jumbled together, no two adjoining ones in the same line, and I do not think there was a right angle in the architecture of the whole place. Even our consul's flagstaff, which might have been expected to hold its head pretty erect in such company, had a decided Grecian bend.

From Avlona we directed our course to Cattaro, distant about a hundred and sixty miles. This run was uneventful, except in affording us some experience of the pangs of thirst. The day after leaving Avlona the heat was intense, and having a quantity of limes on board we concocted an enormous brew of fresh lemonade. The more we drank the thirstier we became, and the thirstier we became the more we drank, of course. Feverish symptoms then set in, combined with those disagreeable sensations peculiar to *ebriositas*, which is "high polite" for "hot coppers." "It must be the saline particles floating about in the air which we inhale and absorb through the pores of our skin," said Righton. That must be it, we all agreed. At all events, it was a scientific sort of reason, and we could think of no other; so more lemonade and more *ebriositas*. At last we thought of examining what should have been the first thing tested—the water. Brackish as it could be! Here Francesco, on whom the duty of refilling our water kegs at Avlona had devolved, and who, to save himself trouble, had evidently drawn his supply from some spring on the sandy shore, fell a victim to popular indignation. He added insult to injury, and threw fuel on the flames of our wrath, by dipping his tarry fingers into the water, and asseverating, "*aqua fresca, signori, aqua fresca.*" Flesh and blood, particularly parched flesh and blood at fever heat, could not stand this, and we forthwith ordered Francesco into the dingy, together with the remainder of the lemonade, and sentenced him to tow us to land, which by the way was out of sight. We tried every liquid we had on board—except, of course, the spirits—but they only fed the fever in our veins. Even our old friend *krassi-marro* turned against us. We would readily have given all our stock of liquor on board for one cup of water apiece. We were in the predicament of the Ancient Mariner:—

" Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
And not a drop to drink."

Poor Francesco! our sufferings must have made us very hard-hearted. We kept him in the dingy at his hopeless task of towing us to land, at the rate of half a knot an hour, until he had drunk up all the lemonade. His eyes then beginning to roll ominously, we took pity on him, and called him on board. There is nothing like convincing obstinate people, and on our asking Francesco if he still thought the water "*aqua fresca*," he crossed himself, and called every saint in his calendar to register his solemn statement that it was *salamoia* (brine). Of course we could eat no dinner. Like Dead Sea fruit, everything seemed to turn to ashes in our mouths. In the evening a light breeze sprung up from the south-west, and we steered due east for the land. There was a bright moon, and by eleven o'clock we were creeping close along shore on the look out for a likely spot. The tinkle of goat-bells soon fell on our ear with a welcome sound, and in ten minutes we were guided by a couple of goatherds to a spring where we slaked our thirst, and filled our water-kegs. We lost no time, and were soon once more on our course gliding over the moon-lit sea.

Owing to calms and light winds, the remainder of the run to Cattaro occupied several days—broiling, breathless days. But if the days were hot and tedious, the nights, bright with moonlight and musical with the ripple of water, were thoroughly enjoyable; so much so that we used to sit on deck until dawn spinning yarns in true nautical fashion. Sometimes Nicolo or Francesco would join in with a tale or two of personal adventure. The latter was the more amusing of the two.

Early on the morning of the fourth day after leaving Avlona, we found ourselves off the mouth of the Bocca di Cattaro. The entrance was guarded by forts, whence a great deal of drumming and bugling proceeded, and where we could see through our glasses squads of Austrian soldiers marching and countermarching, with that high action of the feet and that exaggerated swing of the arm peculiar to the Austrian infantry. Passing between the forts,

we anchored off the little town of Castelnuovo, where we were detained some time by the examination of our passports and papers. All being pronounced correct, we were allowed to proceed on our course up the beautiful Bocca di Cattaro. From the mouth to the town of Cattaro, which is situated at the very extremity of the winding inlet, the distance, as well as I can recollect, is about eighteen miles, and, throughout, the scenery vied with that of the Swiss lakes. We had ample time to observe and admire the lovely panorama which opened before us, as we slowly rounded bend after bend, for it was evening before we dropped anchor off the town.

A little retrogression is here necessary. On one of the broiling hot days between Avlona and the Bocca, Carrington and myself, who were young ensigns, and had not yet shed our "sweet teeth," moved the two old Crimean campaigners, Durant and Righton, to much mirth.

"I say," said I to Carrington or Carrington to me, I forget which, as we were striving to get our teeth through the sinews of a muscular old Albanian hen, "when we get to Cattaro, something light in the way of ices and confectionery will be an agreeable change after this."

"By Jove, that's rich!" roared Durant. "Black maize bread and a cup of goat's milk, that will be more the style of thing."

"Or a piece of strong cheese with a dash of garlic," chimed in Righton, as he joined heartily in the laugh.

Ices and confectionery at Cattaro was so funny, that the two old campaigners could not get over it for days, and the joke was kept up against Carrington and myself to almost the last moment before arriving at that place. As we glided up to our moorings, not fifty yards from the shore, before us, close to the water's edge, was a café, with a pretty garden, in which a band was playing; while ladies and gentlemen, and Austrian officers in spotless white tunics and irreproachable sky-blue pantaloons, were pro-

menading about or sitting at marble-topped tables eating ices and cakes !

"I say, old fellow, how about the black bread and goat's milk ?" said I, as I nudged Durant.

"And the piece of cheese and garlic, eh ?" said Carrington, as he poked his forefinger between Righton's ribs. For a few moments they both looked as if they would like to argue the point, but their position was untenable.

Cattaro seemed such a highly respectable place, compared with the wretched Albanian towns we had visited, that a greater attention to dress than we had hitherto deemed necessary seemed advisable, both on the part of ourselves and our crew, and our flannels were speedily changed for more suitable attire. Piccolo's straw hat, however, was felt to be a blot on our escutcheon. From being constantly used as a shield to save his ears from Francesco's tarry fingers, it was in a sadly dilapidated plight ; and while we sat at dinner, with Nicolo to wait on us, we dispatched Francesco and Piccolo ashore to buy a new hat, merely stipulating that it was to be of a nautical nature.

Before we had finished our meal, which we took below, as was our custom when in crowded harbours, Francesco and Piccolo returned, the latter grinning delightedly under a startling article of fancy straw work. In shape it was like a concertina pulled out to its extreme length, and then allowed to hang gracefully over on one side ; in the front was a peak of polished yellow leather, with little festoons of straw chains over it ; from the top there depended a straw tassel, and along the sides were more festoons. It was a sort of article that might be seen on the head of a little French boy, under the charge of two maiden aunts, and without a single male relative in the world, but nowhere else.

"But it's so unnautical," we all complained. "We told you particularly, Francesco, it was to be a sailor's hat of some description."

"So it is, your excellencies," said Francesco, "a first-rate

148 *A Rough Cruise in Smooth Waters.*

sailor's hat. When fine weather or ashore, wear him like this; at sea, bad weather come, strike topmast, and take in all sail."

Here Francesco suited the action to the word, and shut the concertina up until the tassel was almost out of sight.

The elaborate head-gear was evidently such a crown of joy to Piccolo, that we had not the heart to throw it overboard, or to send him back to get it changed, the two courses that successively commended themselves to us.

After dinner we were rowed ashore, two at a time, in the dingy ly Piccolo, his concertina proudly unfurled to its full extent. The eyes of Cattaro were upon us, and we felt, to make use of an Irish idiom, that the article was "destroying the company." But I suppose it was all right, for on landing we were *milorded ad lib.*, and charged for everything we bought just about three times the price paid by the natives.

"Waiter," said Carrington and myself, as we all sat down at a table in the garden of the café, "bring two *vanille* ices and two glasses of *maraschino* for us, and some black bread, with some cheese and garlic, and two cups of goat's milk for these two gentlemen."

Strange to say, Durant and Righton, though each was a "fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," failed to see the joke, and sharply bade the waiter not to stand grinning like a fool, but to be off at once, and bring ices and *maraschino* for four.

After a day or two at Cattaro, we determined upon riding up to Cetigne, the capital of Montenegro. Cattaro was not great in horseflesh, and it was with some difficulty that we succeeded in engaging four sorry undersized nags for the journey. We started early in the morning, and for the first hour or so were engaged in the tedious ascent of what, if my memory does not serve me a trick, is called "the ladder," a zig-zag path cut in the face of the mountain, which rises abruptly from the rearmost slum of Cattaro. About half-way up we were cut off by a female who scorned the zig-zag path, and boldly scaled the mountain side, trusting to a

stout staff and a stout pair of legs. This was the Cetigne mail. She arrived at the summit of the ladder long before we did.

I cannot say much for the scenery of Montenegro. It is a country of ravines and boulders, most grievous to traverse on horseback or on foot. Any other method of locomotion would be out of the question. Montenegro (black mountain) is a misnomer. Limestone, naked, whitish-grey, scintillating limestone, hurtful to the feet and trying to the eyes, is everywhere. It is said that these naked rocks were once covered with sombre pine forests, whence the name. But the forests have disappeared, and seem to have taken the soil on which they grew along with them. Occasionally we noticed spots from which scanty crops were being coaxed, but the general aspect was barren to an extent that wearied the eye, and saddened the soul. The Montenegrin slopes on the shores of the lake of Scutari are fertile, and the inhabitants devoted to agricultural industry. The fierce highlanders of Montenegro look upon these, their lowland countrymen, as a "poor lot," and even suspect them of Turkish sympathies, which in Montenegro is about the most terrible accusation you can bring against anybody. The fact is, these people have more to lose, and are more exposed to loss, than their brethren of the inaccessible and sterile heights above, and consequently are not so ready to provoke hostilities. I do not know how they have acquitted themselves in the recent crisis. In all probability, they have proved themselves to be as good men and true as their more physically elevated countrymen, and have demonstrated that husbandry is not incompatible with patriotism. On the contrary, it should be an incentive to it. I would sooner defend a potato patch than a stony waste.

On the way to Cetigne we came across no villages, no hamlets, no "gentlemen's places." An isolated hut here and there alone gave signs of an inhabited country. Several of these dwellings we entered, impelled sometimes by thirst for information, sometimes by thirst for water. They were rather less clean than the worst of Irish cabins, and "the gentleman that pays the rint," so

important and privileged an inmate in the last-mentioned establishments, was, to all appearances, equally so in these. The people always received us with a rough welcome. On our entrance the matron would leave off scratching the pig, or break off even in the most exciting chase over the child's head—apparently the two principal indoor feminine recreations of Montenegro—to offer us something from the scant store. The recollections of their simple hospitality restrains me from entering into more details concerning their habitations. I will, therefore, merely add that the interiors left nothing to be desired but to get out of them again as quickly as possible.

Owing to the many stoppages occasioned by the heat, it was nearly two o'clock when we rode into Cetigne. "And this," we exclaimed, "is a European capital!" There appeared to be but one street, a tolerably wide space between two rows of houses, only four or five of which rose to two-storied eminence. Most of the dwellings were mere thatched cottages. The "palace" was nothing more, as regards exterior, than a tolerably large farmhouse, standing in a small space of ground surrounded by a low wall. We were rather anxious to see Prince Nikita, of whom report in these parts spoke favourably. He was not then quite such a well-known personage as he is now, and we looked forward with curiosity to conversing with a man of whose very existence the majority of even educated English people knew nothing, and yet who was a European sovereign. We were disappointed. His Highness was either very busy or unwell on that particular day, I forget which. Anyhow, he was unable to see us, but sent a very polite message to say that if we stayed in Cetigne that night it would give him much pleasure to see us on the following day. In the meantime, he begged to hand us over to the care of a gentleman who was a general and a sort of minister of war. This exalted personage and his aide-de-camp, both of whom were magnificently dressed in the fantastic glitter of Montenegrin attire, treated us very well. We had some very good champagne,



"He drew a flashing *yataghan* from his sash, and knocked off the head of the bottle in a trice."— p. 151

which, by the way, we saw being brought over from the palace, and we will say this much for his Highness of Montenegro, that his liquor is good. Our host's room was merely furnished with a deal table and a few wooden chairs which stood on an uncarpeted floor. Around the walls were some coloured prints, one of Prince Nikita, one of the Czar of Russia, and most of the rest of Russian celebrities. From highest to lowest, in Montenegro, the Russians are objects of hero-worship.

Both our host and his aide-de-camp wore Russian orders, and our guide was similarly decorated. The commencement of our champagne lunch, for bread and cheese converted the entertainment into a meal, was suggestive of an English picnic ; there was no corkscrew ! there was not, and never had been such an implement in the general's establishment. I do not think the aide-de-camp had ever heard of one. He went at the first bottle *literally* tooth and nail, and then, when that would not do, settled the difficulty in true Montenegrin fashion, by an appeal to arms. He drew a flashing *yataghan* from his sash, and knocked off the head of the bottle in a trice. We drank to the health of the prince, to the health of our host, to his aide-de-camp, and to Montenegro generally, out of little mugs of that shape and pattern which generally bear this sort of inscription, "For a good little boy : a present from Ramsgate." After this, over coffee and cigarettes, we fell to talking about the Turks. It was not until then that we saw the real article. You do not know what a Montenegrin is until you get him on this topic. It is like a "view holloa" to a foxhound. It gets his back up, and starts him off in full cry. Several other Montenegrins had now joined the social circle, many carrying about them, in the shape of scars or maimed limbs, ever rankling mementoes of the hated Turk. As they told us of brutal indignities to their wounded and dead on the battle-field, they looked absolutely tigrish ; some of the atrocities we heard from them were indeed enough—

"To turn a coward's heart to steel, a sluggard's blood to flame."

And these fierce mountaineers were neither cowards nor sluggards! They themselves are guilty of fearful brutalities to the Turkish wounded, but reprisal is a horrible game, which step by step converts men into monsters. The wars between the Turkish and Montenegrin races have never been surpassed in bitterness. Neither side asks nor gives quarter.

Our friends waxed terribly fierce over the recital of their wrongs, and at the height of the excitement one of them struck the table a mighty blow, and exclaimed in Italian, "And these were the devils, the accursed devils, for whom you English fought side by side against the blessed Father of the Greek Church."

I began to wish that the prince had not sent over so many bottles of champagne. It was some comfort under the trying circumstances to reflect that I was not a Crimean hero, and I looked hard at Durant, who was, as much as to say to our excited friend, "Please, sir, it wasn't me, it was him." Eventually, however, they all cooled down, and we parted with many mutual protestations of good will.

We left Cetigne in the evening. In truth, the capital of Montenegro did not look the place to spend a happy night in, and notwithstanding the attractions of a royal interview the following day if we stayed, we preferred a speedy return home by moonlight.

I had more to tell about Montenegro from rough notes I took at the time of our visit; but recent events have thrown so fierce a blaze of light on this once obscure little nook of Europe, that anything I could say about the country, its prince, its government, its dress, its one newspaper, would be "a thrice-told tale." Correspondents, "special," "own," and "occasional," have during the last few months completely taken the wind out of my sails, and I now consign the remainder of my rough notes to the waste-paper basket, as "flat, stale, and unprofitable."

The sight of Cattaro from the deck of the *Sylph* early the next morning was refreshing to eyes sore with the naked ugliness of

Montenegro. It is easy to imagine the intense admiration and lavish praise the Montenegrins themselves bestow on Cattaro, for which they have a name signifying everything that is beautiful. They long for it as their port, and a great deal of the national poetry, as well as common country talk, dwells on the future, bright and prosperous in the attainment of this desire. I fear the longing will never be gratified. Cattaro is Montenegro's castle in the air.

We made Cattaro our head-quarters for several days, which were occupied in excursions in the *Sylph* to such portions of the "Bocca" as tempted us by their beauty.

Our next port was Ragusa, about thirty-five miles higher up the coast. As well as being a large sea-port, it has a numerous garrison of Austrian soldiers, and may be termed the Portsmouth of Dalmatia. One of its harbours, that of Gravosa, is magnificent, and the Ragusans are immeasurably proud of it. They have a saying (something similar to the Spanish couplet about Seville) to the effect that he who has not seen Gravosa, is a very unfortunate and benighted individual. We remained some days at Ragusa, first in the town harbour, and afterwards in Gravosa, and fitted the *Sylph* with a new topmast. We made the acquaintance of several Austrian officers of the garrison, and found them manly, pleasant fellows, a little "stand-off" at first, but cordial enough when they found that we did not belong to that class of British tourists with which "tourist agents" have of late years inundated the Continent. They reminded us of our own officers more than those of any other Continental army I have ever met.

Want of space compels me to hurry over the remainder of the cruise. From Ragusa we sailed in a north-westerly direction, visiting on the way nearly every one of those islands which the reader will see, by a glance at the map, so thickly stud the sea off this part of the Dalmatian coast. There was hardly a bay or creek into which the officious little *Sylph* did not poke her nose. She could have hardly been more inquisitively searching

had she been a surveying vessel employed in the preparation of an Admiralty chart, or a revenue cutter on the look out for smugglers. Bathing, fishing, sketching, and exploring, were our principal recreations. The weather was charming. Light winds and smooth seas favoured us. Stiff breezes, no matter how favourable their direction, would not have suited us in this crowded and unknown archipelago. Now and then a squall would burst upon us, but a sharp look-out always enabled us to weather it without any serious consequences. On finding ourselves close to Spalatro, we ran in there. It is rather a fine town, and evidently a summer watering-place for people in those parts. The lions of Spalatro are a cathedral, the tomb of Diocletian, and Austrian officers. Our stay here was of short duration. The wild life amongst the islands had more charms for us than the amenities of civilized existence, and the *Sylph* was soon again threading her way through channel and strait. In this way we ran up nearly to Zara, a town famed for the manufacture of liqueurs. We fain would have paid it a visit, but the date warned us it was time to return, and the *Sylph's* nose was pointed homewards. We revisited many of the islands on our return. The most notable of the group is Curzola. Its chief town, of the same name, is one of the quaintest places I have seen. Curzola was once famed for ship-building, but grass now grows in its narrow, steep streets, and the sound of the shipwright's hammer is not positively deafening. In its palmy days I dare say it turned out many a ship to fight under the banner of St. Mark. Judging from the reputation she once enjoyed, and from her appearance, which looks ancient enough for anything, Curzola may have had the honour of turning out from her yards more than one of those galleasses which were the *Devastations* and *Thunderers* of those days. Such formidable ships were these galleasses, that their captains had orders not to decline an engagement with twenty-five ordinary galleys of war. All these parts are rich in relics of the departed grandeur of Venice. On many a crumbling archway, on many an overthrown

column, the winged lion of St. Mark is still to be seen. These islands furnished the Queen of the Adriatic with some of her stoutest sailors, while the Dalmatian mainland furnished her with large contingents of soldiers.

On one of these islands, far from medical aid, Righton, while climbing some crags, fell and broke his wrist. He bears to this day an unsightly reminder of our want of skill in bone-setting. It was fortunate this catastrophe had not happened earlier, as he was the artist of the party.

Nothing worth recording happened for the remainder of the run homewards, except being caught in a severe squall one dark night off Antivari. To add to our danger, at the most critical moment, when the wind howled loudest and the night was at its darkest, a large Turkish paddle-wheel man-o'-war bore down upon us. How we yelled as we saw the red and green lights coming nearer and nearer! She never altered her course. She evidently neither saw nor heard us, and passed within a few yards of our stern, her great paddle-wheels beating the waves with a roar which for the moment stifled the whistling of the wind. Alas! we did not escape this squall with our usual immunity from misfortune. Piccolo's wondrous nautico-concertina-like head-dress went by the board. I suppose he had not struck his topmast, as exemplified by Francesco, and made all taut for the night. Poor Piccolo! The loss cast quite a gloom over the close of his voyage, and he frequently indulged in a dismal prophecy that he should never have such another hat again. I venture to state that his prophecy has not as yet been and never will be falsified.

We reached Corfu after an absence of six weeks, during which the little *Sylph* had traversed about a thousand miles of sea.



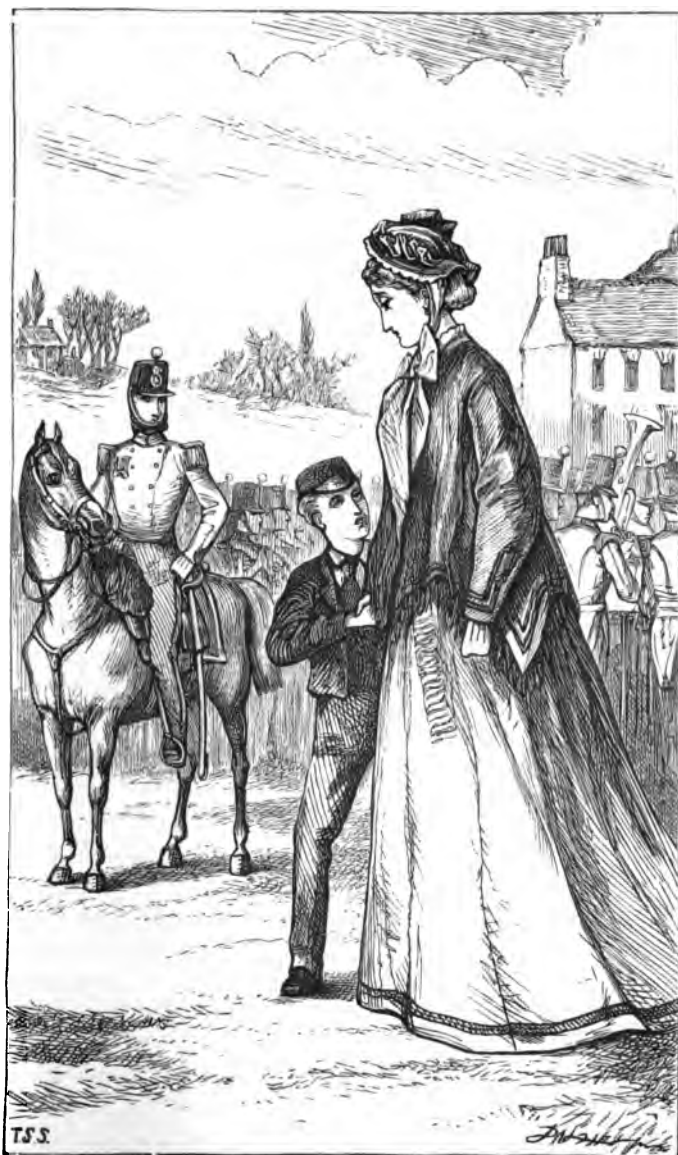
THE ADJUTANT'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

SOME years ago we were quartered in the south of Ireland. We had all but completed our tour of home service, and were under orders to hold ourselves in readiness to embark for the Cape of Good Hope, there to be stationed. I was adjutant of the regiment at the time, and my duties, of course, confined me a great deal to barracks. For some weeks I had noticed a little fellow of about twelve or thirteen years of age, constantly hanging about in the square, and taking in with intent and admiring eyes all the minutæ of barrack life. Hardly an afternoon passed that he was not there gazing on whatever was going on. Even a few defaulters at pack drill formed a spectacle possessing sufficient charms to keep him loitering about for hours. I frequently caught his eye fixed upon me with an expression which plainly intimated that in his estimation I was a very great man indeed. Possibly I shared, though to a less extent, I hope, this opinion, for I was young, had just won my spurs, and, as the saying goes, thought no small beer of myself. But still it was with some inward amusement that I felt myself to be an object of such intense hero-worship as I read in the boy's eyes. Of course, it was only *ex officio* that I commanded all this admiration. Any other tolerably smart young officer in my boots and spurs would have been equally admired. The boy, as many boys are, was evidently caught with the glitter and glare of military externals, and was longing to

be a soldier. I was very nearly throwing cold water on these military aspirations, as far as I could do so, by giving the sergeant on the gate orders not to allow the boy in. In appearance he was far above that class from which our drummer boys are usually recruited, and with his fair girlish face, gentle demeanour, and somewhat delicate frame, he looked far too gently nurtured for a soldier's rough lot.

One morning the regiment had fallen in for commanding officer's parade. We were all in full dress, and the band was playing at the head of the column, while the officers inspected their companies. There, as usual was the little fellow. He knew perfectly well, from experience, the day on which commanding officer's parade was held, and he had not missed the treat for weeks. On this occasion he was accompanied by a quietly, but well-dressed lady of about thirty-two, with a sad, sweet face. I could see at a glance that the two were mother and son. The boy was evidently pleading a cause which did not require any very keen perceptive faculty on my part to divine, and he had chosen his time and opportunity well. The brightest aspect of military life was before them—smart uniforms and inspiring music. His boyish eloquence must have derived fresh force from the surrounding accessories. The colours waved, the bayonets gleamed, and the air was full of martial sounds—the strains of the band as it played a stirring march, the words of command from the officers as they inspected their companies, the clatter of the rifles as they were smartly brought down to the “order,” and the crisp metallic rattle running down the ranks as bayonets were fixed or unfixed. The two formed a picture which riveted my attention. The boy's, I may say the child's countenance, was all aglow with a bright enthusiasm, which, notwithstanding all his passionate pleading, was far from being reflected in the sad face looking fondly down upon him. At last she took his hand and said something to him, and then hastily her handkerchief was carried to her eyes, and she turned her face away from him. Has she consented? I thought.



"The two formed a picture which riveted my attention."—p 153

"Now then, what's the adjutant about?" sung out the chief, in rasping tones. "The companies are ready to move on their coverers, and the points require dressing, sir."

It was the first time the colonel had ever had occasion to find fault with me on parade, and I was not a little chagrined with myself.

"Bother that boy!" I muttered, as I sharply turned my charger's head, and galloped up to dress the points.

We had a long drill, and in the performance of my duties I thought no more of the little scene I had been watching. After the parade had been dismissed some time, I was standing at the door of the orderly-room, when I espied the drum-major approaching, with the boy by his side.

"Ah!" I thought, "she *did* give her consent, then. I was pretty sure this would be the end of the morning's work."

"This boy wishes to enlist, sir," said the drum-major, as he saluted with a semi-smile on his face. He was no doubt tickled at the contrast in size between himself and the little would-be recruit beside him. So was I, and I could not repress a smile. The boy looked ridiculously child-like, standing close alongside the great stalwart drum-major.

"There are a few vacancies in the drum and fifes, aren't there, drum-major?"

"Yes, sir; two or three."

"What's your name?" I asked the boy.

"Harding, sir."

"How old are you?"

"Nearly thirteen, sir."

"Do your friends know and approve of your enlisting?"

"I've only my mother, sir; and she gave me leave this morning."

"Was that your mother looking on at the parade?"

"Yes, sir."

Here I fancied the lip quivered a little, and that the blue eyes,

looking up at me with a considerable amount of awe in them, became a trifle more glistening.

"He's too young, drum-major," I said aside, to that non-commissioned officer.

"Oh, we've had them younger than that, sir ; and they've done first-rate, sir," said the drum-major, who seemed to regard the little lad with favourable eyes, and to be anxious to get him.

"Yes, but of a very different stamp from this boy," I remarked. "No, go home," I said, addressing the boy ; "talk it over with your friends, and then in a week's time, if you and they are still in the same mind, come to me again, and we'll see about it."

The young face assumed an air of intense disappointment, and—there was no mistake about it this time—the large blue eyes became very dim. I thought I had better cut the matter short.

"There, that will do, drum-major," I said. "Take him away."

The drum-major, also with a disappointed air, saluted, and turned on his heel ; then faced to his front again. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, giving his head a twist round in his stock, and slightly raising himself off his heels, a gesture which I have noticed always means in an old soldier, "Excuse the breach of discipline." "Beg pardon, sir," he repeated, poising himself carefully on his toes, but still keeping his heels closed together correctly at an angle of 60°, "this boy has been a great deal about barracks, sir, making up his mind, and he knows what he's about, sir. I've tried him with a fife, and he can play as well as any boy we've got—aye, and better, too. If we let him go, sir, the next regiment will get him. He says he's determined to be a soldier as soon as he can."

"Are you sure your mother approves of this ?" I asked sternly, though I must own that there was a very soft spot in my heart at the moment.

"Yes, sir, quite ;" replied the little fellow, looking unflinchingly up into my face. "Yes, sir, mother thinks I had better be away from home."

"Thereby hangs a tale," thought I. "Very well, drum-major; let him undergo the medical inspection, and be brought up to the orderly-room to-morrow for the commanding officer's approval."

"Very good, sir;" and the stalwart non-commissioned officer saluted with a pleased air, and retired with his small recruit.

That evening I was just about to leave my quarters, dressed for mess, when my servant informed me that a lady wished most particularly to speak to me. The occurrence was unusual, and it was with some curiosity that I told him to show her into my rooms. This was at once done, and at the first glance I recognized in my visitor little Harding's mother, whom, as the reader knows, I had seen that day on the parade-ground with him.

"Ah!" I thought, as we exchanged bows, "I know what's coming. Her tender heart has failed her, and she has come to beg him off."

I was wrong. In a voice which trembled very much at first from nervousness, she explained to me how out of the unfathomable depths of a mother's love she had found the courage to take the liberty of paying me this visit.

I muttered a few commonplace words of assurance, and begged her to be seated. She preferred standing, she said; and with an eloquence springing from a full heart, told me the reason why she had consented to her boy adopting the rough lot of a soldier. In her bitterness of spirit she poured forth a full recital of her wrongs, and at the conclusion of her sad narrative she passionately entreated me to befriend her child.

Of course, I promised to do so. I had been a brute had I not applied this one little drop of comfort to that bruised and aching heart, and I noticed with pleasure the passing brightness which flitted across the sad face as I mentioned how I had noticed the boy for weeks, and had taken a strange interest in him. It was a sad story which she told me. It began with love in a cottage, or rather, what was worse still, in a subaltern's barrack room. She had married, when a bright young girl of

seventeen, a reckless extravagant young ensign, who, as well as being over head and ears in love with her, was also over head and ears in debt, and who, with his handsome face and engaging manners, had soon won her young untried heart. It had been a runaway match, and she soon learned in all its bitterness the truth of the old saying, "Marry in haste, and repent at leisure." A life of miserable poverty ensued ; a child was born, the subject of this story, and within twelve months afterwards the young ensign, worn out in the struggle against adversity, died. I fancy myself that in his troubles he must have taken to drink, and that that was the immediate cause of his death. However, be that as it may, she never said so. She never even as much as hinted at it. His memory was evidently held dearly, and she would have been the last person in the world to assail it. After his death, which happened at a quarter in the south of Ireland not very far from where the scene of this story opens, she settled down with her child in a remote little country village in the same county. Her friends had discarded her on her mad runaway marriage, and all she had to live for was her child ; all they had to live upon was her pension as an ensign's widow. And yet, notwithstanding these straitened circumstances, when time had healed the wound of her husband's death, how peacefully happy had been that lowly little home. Calmly the years glided on until the boy was nine years of age, and at that period there arrived in the village a gentleman on a fishing excursion. He took up his quarters at the one little inn the place boasted, and remained some weeks. During this time he had many opportunities of seeing the widow, as she strolled about the country lanes with her child, entering into his innocent amusements as only a young and fond mother can. The stranger went away, but not many weeks elapsed ere he returned ; and as there was no fishing to be had, there must have been some other attraction in the primitive little village. The attraction was the young widow. He had fallen in love with her sweet face, and had determined to make her his wife. Through

the clergyman of the parish he obtained an introduction to her, and after a short time he offered her, as the saying goes, his hand and his heart. She was astounded, and declined both most decisively. All her affections in this world centred in her child, and she would have no love going between her and him. Nevertheless, this determined suitor would not take a refusal. Though retiring at first from further importunity, he after a while renewed his attentions, but with no better success. He was a rich manufacturer, of low origin ; and the same dogged perseverance which had raised him in his business now attended him in his courtship. For years he persecuted her with his offers of marriage, and, with consummate knowledge of woman's nature, he strove to win her heart by first winning her child's. He affected to have conceived the greatest liking for him, and loaded him with gifts. Still he was unsuccessful—even this manœuvre failed. "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," the young widow might have said to herself—though it is more than probable that she did not know a line of Virgil, and had never heard of Æneas in her life. At last doubts began to arise in her mind as to whether it was not her bounden duty to her child to better her own position, in order that she might be the more able to better his. It had been all very well while he had been a little child. A mother's care and teaching had been all-sufficient then. But now he was eleven years old, and required a higher tuition than she could give him. Byron says—

" An only son left with an only mother
Is brought up much more wisely than another."

But Byron I don't suppose meant that the boy was to be tied to his mother's apron-strings, and not to go to school. The young widow, though the separation would be a black cloud over her existence, longed to be able to send the boy to a good school. He was gently born, and she wished him to be brought up as a gentleman. The only school, however, she could have afforded

to send him to was the village school, to herd with the young yokels, and she shrank from this course. History would have afforded her an instance of how a child of gentle, even illustrious birth, had received his education at a village school among ploughboys, and had afterwards risen to be the greatest man of his generation. But I dare say she did not know much more of Warren Hastings than of Æneas, and this example was lost to her.

The rich and mealy-mouthed manufacturer made all sorts of fair promises concerning what he would do for the child were he his stepfather ; and at last, for the sake of her boy, she consented to become the wife of this man.

How differently from what she had hoped and expected did matters turn out ! The manufacturer proved to be of a low and coarse nature. He became jealous of the love she bore her child, and on his devoted little head descended all the bitter acrimony of a coarse, jealous nature. He also hated the child because he was better born than he was, and looked it. When she begged this man to fulfil his promise and send the boy to a good school, his coarse unfeeling rejoinder was that the child was not *his* son ; that he was the son of a pauper, and that the proper school for him was a charity school.

One day this man, in the presence of the boy, spoke with brutal harshness to her, and the little fellow with flashing eyes, crimson cheeks, and clenched fists, had stood forth as his mother's champion. From that moment the man regarded the boy with feelings of utter detestation, and his object seemed to be to break that youthful spirit which had dared to flash out against *him*.

The child's home—if that sacred name, teeming as it does with sweet and tender associations, can be here applied—now became unendurable ; and he also had the sense beyond his years, to perceive that in all probability his absence might lead to more harmonious relations between his stepfather and his mother.

Tenderly he cherished the memory of his soldier father—he had been taught to do that from infancy—and his earliest wish had been to become a soldier like him. He now perpetually implored his mother to let him enlist at once as a drummer-boy, telling her, with boyish enthusiasm, how he felt sure he would win a commission for himself by the time he was old enough. She would not hear of it at first; she could not bring herself to let him go; but the treatment of him became worse and worse, and at last, with a breaking heart, she had consented.

Such was the sad little tale of domestic woe.

It may strike the reader, and naturally so, as very strange that a lady should thus unburden her heart to a perfect stranger, and that stranger one of the opposite sex. It did not seem strange to me, and I think it would not have seemed strange to the reader either, could he have heard the narrative as it came straight from that bursting heart. I discerned what were the feelings which prompted her to this confidence. I read it in her tones, her manner, her face. She would not for the world have it thought by those amongst whom her child was going, that he was a worthless boy, whose relations were only too anxious to get rid of him, a conclusion which would have been a natural one. Anything sooner than that ill should be thought of him; and so she laid bare the wound in her heart and told me the truth, the whole truth. I must add, however, that there are certain points in the story I have given the readers, which I learned after the interview from acquaintances down in the town.

"But," said I, as she concluded her story, "you know the regiment is under orders for the Cape of Good Hope, and will proceed there almost immediately. Would it not be less of a trial to you both if your son were to go into a regiment not so far away from home, into the one which will relieve us, for instance?"

"I have thought of that," she replied, "and have come to the conclusion that it would be better for both of us, particularly for him, that we should be far apart. To be near and not able to

come to me would make him miserable and prevent him from settling down in his new life. No, it is better he should go abroad. The Cape is healthy, and with God's blessing upon him and a mother's prayer night and day for his welfare, let him go there. In the name, too, the Cape of *Good Hope*, there is something that sounds very sweet and cheering. It almost seems to say to one those blessed words, 'Be of good cheer.'"

Here she paused, and with closed eyes, quite oblivious of my presence, she murmured softly to herself two or three times over, "the Cape of *Good Hope*." The lips moved in silence and I felt that a prayer was being wafted heavenwards.

"Besides," she added, after a few moments, in a soft and different tone, "my boy has taken so much to you, and after your kindness to-night, it will henceforth be one of the greatest blessings of my life to feel that there will be someone near him who will be a friend to him."

I reiterated my promise, and with a few words of heartfelt gratitude, she bade me good evening and left.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, after the colonel had "told off" prisoners, little Harding was marched into the orderly-room by the drum-major, to be inspected and finally approved of, or otherwise, by the commanding officer. Besides the chief and myself, who were sitting at the table, there were several officers standing about, and the boy's appearance created quite a sensation. He was so different from the unwashed little tatterdemalions who usually presented themselves for enlistment as drummer-boys. As the little fellow found himself in presence of the colonel, he uncovered

his fair, curly head, and bowed politely. The old chief, utterly taken aback, bowed grimly in return, while a smile came into the faces of the officers, who were evidently amused at the sight of the stern, grizzled old chief bowing to a boy recruit across the orderly-room table.

"This boy, sir," I explained, "wishes to enlist as a drummer. The drum-major, who has examined him as a musician, reports most favourably, and is very anxious to get him, as there are two or three vacancies in the drums."

While I was speaking, the chief was narrowly scrutinizing the boy, and, when I finished, remarked—

"Oh, nonsense! I'm not going to take this boy. It would be regular kidnapping. He has run away from school, I should think. No, no. Go home, my little man, go home," he said, sharply, but still with a kind look in his weather-beaten face, "and learn your lessons, and do what you're bid, and when you get older you'll be able to do something better than to beat a drum."

It was a very trying moment for the small aspirant to military renown. Every eye in the room was upon him. Even the old orderly-room clerk, whose mind was generally supposed to be dead to everything but "duty states" and "regimental returns," left off scribbling with his pen, and scratched his nose meditatively with it while he stared with all his might and main.

Under this concentration of scrutiny little Harding flushed crimson, and stood nervously twirling his cap. It was a trying ordeal for a young boy to go through, and no wonder he looked shy. The old chief certainly wore a kind smile; but then he also wore such a thick, grizzled moustache, that you never knew what he was doing in that way behind it; and little Harding was deprived of the reassurance. In his dilemma he looked appealingly at me, as much as to say, "*You* tell him about it all. *I* can't."

In response to this mute appeal, I leaned across the table, and said in a low tone, "I know all the facts of the case, sir, and can vouch for his being no truant from school or from home. In

short, I am in a position to state, that under the circumstances of his case his enlistment is not, as it looks, an unwise step. In fact, it's about the best thing he can do."

"Take him out for the present, drum-major," said the colonel, "and wait outside with him. I'll see about the matter."

The room was at once cleared, and then the colonel asked me for more particulars. "For," said he, "it is far from my wish or intention to entrap this little lad into a position which, to all appearance, he is above, and I must hear the facts and judge for myself whether I shall let him do as he wishes."

I briefly gave just the salient points of the sad little tale I had heard the evening before, and Harding was once more summoned to the presence.

"Now," said the colonel, addressing him, "after what the adjutant has told me, I am willing to allow you to enlist as a drummer in my regiment, and I hope you'll prove yourself a good, steady, smart young soldier, and get on."

"Thank you, sir. I promise you I will," said little Harding, stoutly.

The old chief was not in the habit of thus holding forth to young recruits, but he had never had such a recruit as this one.

"What's your name in full?" he asked.

"Edward Vereker Harding, sir."

"Humph! Edward Harding will do. Now, Edward Harding," said the colonel, consulting a slip of paper which the orderly-room clerk, machine-like, had placed in front of his commanding-officer, after having dived into an enormous book, in which the name and number of every non-commissioned officer and man in the regiment was kept—"now, Edward Harding, your regimental number will be 1153, and you'll be posted to K Company. There, that will do; let him be sent to drill at once."

Little Harding, as he heard himself thus enrolled as one of the defenders of his country, drew himself up proudly, saluted as correctly and smartly as the best soldier in the regiment, and

retired with the drum-major, who was in a sort of martial ecstasy over his promising young recruit.

Later on in the morning, I sent for the master-tailor of the regiment, and gave him instructions that he was to be most particular in fitting Drummer Harding with his clothes, and that any additional expense for alteration was to be charged to my private account. I also sent for the master-shoemaker, and gave him similar instructions with regard to *his* department. This was rather weak of me, I confess. No officer—an adjutant, perhaps, less than any other—should show “favour and affection” in any way; but the sad, sweet face of the mother kept rising before my mind’s eye, the pleading tones of her voice still rung in my ears, and I could not resist the performance of any little act of kindness which my sympathy might suggest.

My interview with the latter official was barely concluded, when the drum-major, after a premonitory tap at my door, and the subsequent permission to enter, burst into my room in such a state of excitement that he actually slurred the four motions of his salute into three, and I do believe I might have inserted a sixpenny bit between his heels.

“Dear me,” I thought, “something very serious must be the matter with the drum-major for him to be guilty of, in his own eyes, so fearful an enormity as *that*.” I was right.

“If you please, sir,” he blurted out in tones of the deepest indignation, “Captain Sharp and the band-sergeant have been at Drummer Harding, and they’ve taken him off to the commanding officer to try and get him transferred from the drums to the band.”

Now Captain Sharp was the President of the Band Committee, and filled that position with an enthusiasm and keenness which occasionally led him into fierce strife—generally with me, I am sorry to say. He was almost music mad, and this combined with the fact that his Christian name was Charles and his surname Sharp, soon procured for him in the regiment the sobriquet of C sharp. Being, however, of a contradictory turn of mind,

C sharp was gradually changed into B flat, and as "old B flat" he was known throughout the regiment.

If little Harding once got into the clutches of B flat, I knew he would be lost to the drums for ever. I was particularly anxious that he should remain in the drums, for then he would be more under my eye and care. I must explain that in all regiments the band is under the management of a committee, consisting of a captain, as president, and two subalterns, as members, but the drums and fifes are usually left under the sole supervision of the adjutant. I was very proud of my drums and fifes, from the stalwart drum-major, who was about the finest and smartest in the service, down to the smallest drummer-boy, and many a pitched battle did I and old B flat have over some smart youngster. But never did we fight for such a prize as little Harding.

Under these circumstances the drum-major's intelligence was to me as a cry of "Stand to your arms!" to a picket on outpost duty in an enemy's country.

"Hang that old B flat! I wish he'd get his head jammed into one of his bassoons and keep it there," I muttered to myself, as I seized my forage cap, and, followed by the drum-major, rushed off to rescue my *protégé*—for as such I looked upon little Harding since his mother's visit to me—from the clutches of old B flat.

I arrived at the orderly room only just in time. As I entered, the brow of B flat grew black. I did not lose a moment in trying to turn the enemy's flank.

"I hope, sir," I said to the colonel, "that if Captain Sharp is trying to induce you to transfer Drummer Harding to the band, that you will think fit not to accede to his request."

"Well," replied the colonel, "I must own that on his representations I was on the point of doing so. It appears this boy possesses undoubted talent for music, and as Captain Sharp justly remarks, he will receive better instruction in the band, and so I think in justice to the boy himself we ought to send him to it."

"Quite so, sir," said old B flat, with a triumphant look at me, for which I could have thrown my forage cap at him.

"Not at all, sir," I replied. "If he goes into the band, there is little or no prospect of promotion before him, for once in the band, Captain Sharp will never let him get out again; whereas, if he goes into the drums now, he will join the ranks as soon as he's old enough, and then with his education and disposition he will obtain rapid promotion, and in all probability will win a commission for himself at an early age. I hope, sir, you will now see that it is much more to the boy's own interest that he should remain a drummer for the present."

"I hope you won't be guided by the adjutant's fallacious arguments, sir," said B flat. "The boy's too good for a drummer. He'd be thrown away. Any fool can beat a drum."

"At all events," I retorted, "he doesn't *look* such a fool beating a drum, as when he's blowing a flute."

Now old B flat was very fond of playing his flute, and as I let fly this shot plump into him, he blew his cheeks out, and glared fiercely at me.

"Well, well," said the old chief, who did not care two straws which way the matter ended, and was quietly laughing in his sleeve all the time; "fight it out between the two of you."

We *did* fight it out. Old B flat and myself went at each other hammer and tongs, while we could hear outside in the passage the drum-major and the band-sergeant simultaneously engaged in a pitched battle.

"Come, come," said the chief at last, as the two of us waxed rather too warm. "I can't see that the matter is worth all this, and remember, gentlemen, that music, they say, has charms to soothe the savage breast. I can't say I know much about it myself. The only tunes I know anything of, and think worth listening to, are 'God Save the Queen,' and 'The Roast Beef of Old England.' There, that will do; we won't continue the

discussion. I'll settle the matter by letting the subject of the contention choose for himself. It's rather an unusual course, but this is rather an unusual little fellow we're dealing with. Call him n."

In a few moments little Harding was confronting the colonel, while B flat and the band-sergeant on one side, and myself and the drum-major on the other, stood awaiting the decision.

"Now, Harding," said the colonel, "which would you like, to remain in the drums or go to the band?"

"Remain a drummer as I am, if you please, sir," replied the little fellow, with an involuntary glance at me, which I quite understood meant, "I know you wish it."

"Oh, you know," said old B flat fussily, "the boy doesn't know what's for his own good."

"Doesn't he?" I said. "I think, on the contrary, he has just proved that he does!"

"Come, come, no more of this; the matter's settled," said the chief sharply. "The boy will remain in the drums. There, that will do."

Triumphantly the drum-major swooped down on little Harding, and bore him off.

CHAPTER III.

A SMARTER looking little soldier-lad never beat a drum or blew a fife, than little Harding, when he had been fitted with clothing by the master-tailor. Right well had that worthy non-commissioned officer executed my order, that he was to take exceptional trouble over this young recruit, and as far as fit went, the best equipped officer in the regiment, who had his clothes from the

first London tailor, could not boast of a better tunic and shell-jacket. Very proud did the little fellow look of himself, as I watched him going out of the barrack gate, on the day he received his clothing, on his way, I felt certain, to show himself off before his mother. I am sure I did not go into the army for the sole sake of the uniform. I was actuated by much loftier aspirations, my firm intention and determination being to throw into the shade the deeds of Marlborough and Wellington. Nevertheless, well do I recollect the unalloyed pleasure that was mine when I arrayed myself for the first time in my bright new uniform, and displayed my gorgeous self to an admiring family circle. How much greater then, I daresay, was little Harding's delight; for he was but a child, and about six years younger than I was when a similar event occasioned me so much pleasure. Certainly my uniform had been of fine, bright scarlet cloth, ornamented with gold lace, and his was merely a coarse little shoddy jacket, of a brick-like red, trimmed with worsted and cotton braid. But still it was very beautiful in his eyes. I do not think the gaudy uniform which told his mother with so much realistic vividness that her boy was at last a soldier, could have afforded *her* much pleasure.

Just about this time, luckily for little Harding and his mother, the ill-conditioned cross-grained manufacturer was called away on business for a couple of weeks, and mother and son were able to see a great deal of each other before that parting between them which was drawing so near. In my rides and walks in the neighbouring country, I often met them walking together in the lanes. On these occasions, little Harding's salute was a sight. He gave such a sweep of his arm that he was always obliged to sheer away a couple of feet from his mother's side beforehand. This and other elaborate preparations, such as pulling up his stock, and pulling down his waist-belt, I used to notice as I approached, and they always afforded me no small amount of inward amusement. Once, on sharply turning the corner of a lane, I caught

him with his hand lovingly in hers, upon which the little fellow, who evidently thought he had been detected in an act unworthy of his cloth, became very red and so confused, that he knocked his forage cap over his eyes, in a hasty and demoralized attempt at a smart salute. Of course, I always took my hat off to her, and it was rather an anomalous spectacle to see me bowing with all the grace at my command to the mother, while the son saluted me with all the rigid respect of a private soldier. Sometimes I stopped and spoke a few words to her concerning the progress of her boy so far in his military career, and as I had never anything to say of him but was most favourable, these communications always lighted up her sad sweet face with a gleam of pleasure which was very pleasant to see.

One day, however, a piece of intelligence I had to give, brought anything but pleasure. I was riding home after having paid a few farewell visits to some neighbouring families, who had behaved, as is usually the case in Ireland, with the warmest hospitality to us. I was in low spirits rather. Saying "good-bye" for a term of years is anything but exhilarating, and I was riding along at a slow pace, when I descried little Harding and his mother approaching.

"I had better tell her at once," I said to myself: and on reaching them, I pulled up for that purpose.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Dermott," I said; Dermott being the name of the rich manufacturer, her husband. "I have a piece of intelligence to give you which, however, is of course not unexpected, though I must say it has come rather suddenly at last."

You see I was a little roundabout, for she looked rather delicate, and I was afraid of coming out too suddenly with what I had to say.

"Yes," I went on, "this morning we received an intimation that the transport will be here the day after to-morrow, and an order that we are to embark within four days from this."

She pressed her hands so tightly together that I could see them shaking in the intensity of the pressure, and the colour left her face until it became so deadly white that I was afraid she was going to faint, and drew my feet out of the stirrups ready to spring down to her assistance. She recovered herself, however, and then I glanced at little Harding who, according to his usual custom during these interviews, had been standing rigidly at attention, gazing up into my face with the greatest awe. Poor little chap, he was very white about the gills, and there was a nervous quivering of his lips as he turned his eyes on his mother. For his sake she bravely bore up, and spoke with an attempt at cheerfulness—rather a feeble attempt certainly, but still, considering how the fond mother's heart was wrung, a very brave one.

"Though, as you say, we have been expecting this, it has come upon us rather suddenly at the last. But Teddie, darling," she said, the mother's feelings for the moment entirely overpowering all others, "remember what I told you about the Cape of Good Hope; how we have been reading together every book about it that we could get; and what a fair lovely country it must be. Think of the name, darling, 'Good Hope,' and so shall I. From the first," she added, turning to me, "the name has seemed to me to be such a favourable omen."

"Yes, but ——"

I hesitated, I shrunk from poisoning that one little drop of consolation which she had so beautifully, so touchingly drawn from her cup of bitterness.

"But what?" she asked, nervously.

"Well, we're not going to the Cape of Good Hope after all. That order has been rescinded at the last moment, and our destination has been altered to China."

"China! oh, how far!" she gasped, as she checked herself in what I saw was a sudden impulse to throw her arms round his neck, and draw him to her.

"Yes, China," I said; "we are to proceed to Hong Kong, there to be quartered."

"Oh, is not that unhealthy?" she asked, with white quivering lips.

"Not nearly as bad as it's painted, I daresay. These places with bad names never are. But what I was thinking, Mrs. Dermott, was this. Our depôt is to be left in this very town, and if you like, I will manage to get your son left behind with it. It is certainly never so good for a youngster to be at the depôt as at the head-quarters of his regiment, and my advice to all youngsters, officers, and soldiers, is always 'Stick to the colours.' But, under the circumstances, perhaps, in this case, it would be better if he stayed with the depôt."

"Oh, God bless you for your kindness," she said. "I think the best way will be for us to have a quiet talk together, eh, Teddie? and, with help from above, I have no doubt we shall be guided to take the best course. Can you give us until to-night to decide?"

"Oh yes, to-morrow morning if you prefer it; but it must be very early to-morrow morning, for the exact marching-out state as also the strength of the depôt, must be in at the District Quarter-master-General's office punctually at twelve."

She promised me that I should have the final decision in time, and after again thanking me, we resumed our respective ways. As they moved off little Harding's salute was rather limp, and when after a little while I looked back at their retreating forms, one of his hands was in hers, and with the other he was engaged, as far as I could see, in the very unsoldierlike occupation of dabbing his eyes with his pocket-handkerchief. I am not sure that mine were not a little dim, and so small blame to the child, say I.

I retired early from the mess that evening, as I had several farewell letters to write to the loved ones at home. On entering my room, I encountered my servant in the act of leaving it.

"If you please, sir," he said, "Drummer Harding brought this letter for you when he came in at tattoo. I was just going to bring it to you at the mess."

Of course I knew what the letter was about. "Dépôt," I mentally remarked as I took it; "a thousand pounds to a postage stamp she has decided on the dépôt."

I was a very knowing fellow, wasn't I? The reader by perusing the following, will learn how right I was.

"Thursday, 8.30 P.M.

"DEAR SIR,—We have decided, and I think our decision will surprise you. That we have been helped to it by Divine assistance mercifully granted to me in answer to my prayer, I firmly believe. We have chosen China in preference to the dépôt. In my first interview with you I alluded to circumstances under which it is better that my darling boy should be away from me, and I will not, therefore, repeat those reasons, which are as forcible as they are painful. Teddie, my own darling Teddie—oh! forgive me, if, while I'm writing this with a bursting heart, I sink all feelings in those of the mother!—my own darling child regards you with that sort of hero-worship which you know often creeps into a young, ardent, and affectionate heart, and he feels he should like to remain with the head-quarters where you are. As regards the unhealthiness of the climate, what, after all, does it matter? If He wills it, what earthly perils and dangers are there out of which he cannot bring my darling? And will not my prayers, morning, noon, and night, as long as there is breath in this body, be offered up for his safety?

"Your past kindness is, I feel, an ample guarantee that you will, as far as the difference in your respective position allows, befriend my boy. He is but a little child; and oh, remember when you were his age how you were cherished and tenderly guarded from harm; how a mother's loving care stood between you and evil, like a holy shield; and, oh, when you think of this

and contrast it with what my child's lot will be, help him, oh, help my little one in his struggle to continue as he is now—good and pure as the angels in heaven.

"I cannot write more. Indeed, I have written too much already. Forgive me.

"Sincerely yours,

"With everlasting gratitude,

"ANNIE BLANCHE DERMOTT."

The first three pages were unsoiled, but the last was blistered with tears. This passionate appeal to me from one almost frenzied with grief, aroused my strongest sympathy. I at once sat down and wrote a reply, in which I gave her my solemn promise to do all she had asked me.

"I will send this off at once. It will bring some peace to her troubled mind," I said to myself; "and who so fit to be a messenger of peace as her boy? I will send it by him."

"Lights out!" was just being sounded by the bugler on duty, as I walked across the barrack-square to where the drummers were quartered, and I sent an orderly corporal up to tell Drummer Harding that I wished to see him at once. The little fellow, it appeared, was getting into bed, but he slipped on his clothes again, and was down in a few moments.

"Would you like to take a letter from me to your mother, at once, Harding?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

The child's face brightened up at the unexpected prospect of seeing his mother again so soon.

"Very well. You'd better be off at once. I think it will please her."

"Oh, thank you, sir."

"And, Harding, is Mr. Dermott at home?"

No, sir."

"Well, you needn't come back to-night. You can stay down there until to-morrow morning, and I'll tell the sergeant of the barrack-guard to let you pass."

The little fellow was so overcome with gratitude that he could say nothing, but threw as much of his feelings as he could into a most elaborate salute, and went off on his errand, while I followed to make it all right with the sergeant of the guard.

I think I went back to my room in an improved frame of mind, after I had despatched my little messenger of comfort.

CHAPTER IV.

THE day of departure arrived, and for the last time we paraded in the barrack square, which for fifteen months had been my principal sphere of action. By twelve o'clock we were to be on board the transport which lay alongside the jetty awaiting her living freight of a thousand souls. At a few minutes after eleven we were ready to start, with our band, and the band of the regiment which had marched in to relieve us, at the head of the column. On our flank, stalwart and commanding, stands the grey-haired old chief.

"Collect reports," is his order to me.

Down I go from company to company, and from each commanding officer I receive the welcome intelligence, "All present;" and so on to the tenth and last company. Then turning, I walk towards the chief, salute him with my sword, and with a certain amount of elation in my tones, report—

"All present, sir."

That report is more to him than if I had put a hundred pounds

into his hands. He moves the regiment into quarter column, and faces it towards him.

"Thank you, my men, thank you," he says in manly, outspoken tones. "Not one man absent! You've made me proud of my old regiment. In times of peace there is no greater strain on the discipline of a corps than when it is marching out of home quarters for a foreign one; and never have I known a regiment come through the ordeal with such flying colours as you have. You have pleased me more than I can tell you. May God's blessing be upon you all in that far-off land to which we are going; and may you do your duty there as you have done it on this occasion. And when I ask that God's blessing may be upon ourselves in our long sojourn from home, let us also ask that God's blessing may be upon those we leave behind."

It is with considerable fervour that the chief says this. He himself, at the call of duty, is leaving a beloved wife and a family to which he is devoted; and there are plenty of others like him. I hear many a muttered, "Aye, God bless 'em," in the ranks, and many an eye grows dim as parents and children, sweethearts and wives are thought of.

The old chief, however, is not the man for "the doldrums" at any time, more especially when there is work to be done, and so he at once harks back to the original subject of his remarks.

"Not one man absent, eh? Not one case of drunkenness! A clean guard sheet! Not a man to be marched on board as a prisoner! My lads, you've made me as proud as—as——"

The chief is at a loss for a good simile, and, in dead silence, the regiment anxiously awaits it.

"—as—as—hang it—as a peacock with a new tail!"

With one accord the regiment grins from ear to ear, and for some moments the chief's generally stern features relax into a genial smile. He is not much given, however, to unbending in this way; in fact, I don't recollect anything of the sort before, but he feels his men deserve a little easy friendliness after the

splendid way in which they have sustained the credit of their corps; and he is anxious to put them in a good humour before marching them off. The smile only lasts a few moments, and at the word "Front," the regiment immediately assumes a countenance of preternatural gravity.

Slowly round the barrack square looks the chief, as if taking a last farewell. Then the tones of his voice ring sharply out—

"Fours, right; by successive companies from the front, left wheel, quick march."

The wonderful machinery of flesh and blood is at once in motion. There is a measured tramp of feet: the bands in front mark time; that noisy warrior, the big drummer, casts his eye back to catch the moment when the left foot comes to the ground, and when he has caught it, he smites his instrument a mighty blow with an extra flourish this morning, as much as to say, "There, my boys, that's the last time I'll set you a-goin' on British ground, and I'll hit him a good 'un for yer." The first boom of the drum is still reverberating through the barrack square, when our band's mellow strains of "Auld Lang Syne" float on the air, and away we swing for the last time through the barrack gate, many a sorrowful heart amongst us, notwithstanding all the swagger and the brave show.

Our route to the wharf lies right through the town, and people rush out of the shops and to the windows to see us go by. Some wave handkerchiefs, some cheer, and all, I think, feel good wishes towards the red-coats going ten thousand miles away from home. Many a kind word of farewell comes from the crowd, which increases with every step we take. After a bit our band stops playing, and then the other one takes it up with "I'm leaving thee in sorrow, Annie." Just at this time we happen to be passing the house where little Harding's mother lives, and I see at an upper window a white set face, whose eyes are striving to pierce the dense crowd which surges and shouts round the bands and drums. All in a moment the face flushes up and becomes ani-

mated with a look of intense feverish yearning. She has caught sight of him. We pass on, and then I recollect from the letter I received a few evenings before, that little Harding's mother's Christian name is Annie, and I imagine with what a sad fitness the plaintive march to which we are striding along must fall on his and her ears. I find myself sympathetically humming the words in time to the music :—

“ I'm leaving thee in sorrow, Annie,
I'm leaving thee in tears,
It may be for a long time, Annie,
Perhaps for many years.”

But I have no time for indulging in “sweet melancholy,” as some poet calls it, with a strangely perverted idea of what's nice. I am anxious to get to the wharf to take up the points for the regiment to march upon. With this object I stride along quickly, and am soon up with the drums and fifes. The drum-major of the band holds his stick up and stops the march. Then piercing the air—and maybe the hearts of many with their shrill notes—our fifers strike up, “The Girl I leave behind Me.” The crowd give a cheer, and the little ragamuffins, with whom the drums and fifes are especially popular, dance merrily alongside, shouting and laughing. I glance at little Harding. I do not know whether it is her face at the window, or the last sad march which has upset him. Both, I suppose. He is indeed “leaving her in tears.” He is blowing away as hard as he can into his small fife, and contributing his full share of shrill notes, but the tears are streaming fast down his cheeks, and I fear the instrument will soon be water-logged. But he sticks to it manfully, and goes along in a series of kangaroo-like little jumps, which is the only way, poor little chap, he can manage to make his small legs keep step with the longer ones about him. I feel very much for him, but I have plenty to do.

In a few minutes we are drawn up on the wharf, and the

general commanding the district, accompanied by his staff, appears on the scene for just one final look at us. He is an old friend of our chief ; they have fought and bled together, and they wring each other heartily by the hand. I am standing close by, and I hear the chief, in high feather, narrating the creditable circumstances which had made him so proud that morning, and the general receives the communication with evident satisfaction. He then walks down the ranks, just cursorily glancing at the men ; he knows there is no occasion to closely inspect the regiment which his old friend commands ; and then, after we have formed close column, he says a few farewell words to us, while the crowd clusters round and listens with great awe and attention to "the general spaking." He is a fine old fellow, something of the same cut as our own chief, and is well known to be a soldier's true friend. His oratory is of that style which goes straight to a soldier's heart.

"Well done, —th !" he says. "Well done ! Do you know I heard those very words said to you by a general of division, when, with grape and shell tearing through your ranks, you carried an earthwork of the enemy's in gallant style, at the point of the bayonet. Right well did you deserve those words on that day, and right well, say I, do you deserve them on this. Yes ; well done, —th ! Ah, my lads, it is not only on the battle-field that a soldier sustains the credit of his cloth : it is not only with his sword a soldier carves his reputation ; he can raise it in the eyes of his countrymen almost, if not quite as much, by his good behaviour amongst them in quarters. I hold in my hand what I look upon as indeed a proud record in your annals. It is your 'marching-out state' this day. Not a single prisoner ; not an absentee ; not a case of drunkenness. In all my experience I never recollect a regiment leaving for foreign service under such creditable circumstances. I am as proud to have had you under my command, as I am sorry now to lose you. But of this you may rest assured, that your conduct will not be unrecorded, and

your good example shall not be thrown away on the regiments in my district. I shall put pretty nearly what I have just said to you into General Orders, and I shall direct the same to be read to every regiment under my command on three successive parades."

A murmur of pleasure here runs down the ranks, and each man looks as proud as Punch.

"Good-bye to you all. I am sorry to lose you. We are all sorry to lose you, aren't we, my friends?" he says, turning in a genial, off-hand manner to the crowd, which responds with tremendous cheering, and cries of, "Thru for you, gineral!" "Bedad, gineral, an' we are!" "Begorra! them's the boys!" "Hurroosh!" etc.

"There, my lads," continues the general, as soon as these Hibernian ebullitions of friendship have, in a measure, subsided, "you see how many friends you're leaving behind you. But enough of speech-making. Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, everyone of you, from the colonel down to the smallest drummer" (I think of little Harding), "I wish you all happiness and prosperity in the country you're going to. May you have a comfortable and safe voyage out, and, better still, after you have done your duty to your Queen and your country abroad, may you have a happy return home. I cannot shake the hands of all of you individually, though I should be proud to do so; but I can shake your hands collectively in this way. Farewell, —th!"

As he says this, he grasps the hand of the colonel, and it is a sight that does us good, and stirs our hearts, to see the two stalwart, grey-headed old soldiers, hand-in-hand before us all, their breasts glittering with many a gloriously won medal.

Immediate embarkation is now the order. The men file on board by companies, with their officers, and as the last company is swallowed up in the dark sides of the great monster of wood and iron, the band of the regiment which relieved us, and which is drawn up at the head of the jetty, strikes up, in chaffy allusion to our destination—"You may go to Hong Kong for me."

A shout of laughter from our men crowding on the foc'sle, shows that they have caught the allusion. An Irish crowd is much quicker and sharper than an English one, and, amidst much good-humoured laughter, a regular chorus chimes in with the band:—

“ You may go-o, you may go-o,
You may go to Hong Kong for me.”

What a strange scene it is—laughter and tears !

We are all on board now. I was the last of us to step from Irish soil, and most certainly I did not shake the dust off my feet. A truly Irish scene now follows. A strolling singer, called Denis M'Grath, a well-known character to us all, and a great favourite with both officers and men, now comes conspicuously to the front. He is a dark, handsome, well-built fellow, with a twinkling eye, and is dressed in the garb of owld Ireland—knee-breeches, bluish-grey worsted stockings, and a green cut-away short-tailed coat, with brass basket buttons, the whole surmounted by a soft felt *caubeen*;* in the band of which the traditional black *dhudeen*† is of course stuck. In his hand he carries the equally traditional shillelagh, which, in his lithe fingers can be made to do anything, he will tell you, but “spake.” Many a weary hour in barracks has Denis beguiled with song, and his appearance is hailed with delight by the men, and by the officers too, only they do not testify their delight so noisily. Approaching to the very edge of the wharf, Denis begins singing, in a rich, mellow voice, that most beautiful and pathetic of all ballads, “The Irish Emigrant.” Well does he know from experience that in all his *répertoire* it is the most popular one amongst us. For the first few verses Denis's voice is almost drowned by the shouting around, but gradually a stillness falls on the crowd, and by the time he arrives at the last verse there is a dead silence. Stretching out his arms towards us,

* A small hat of the wide-awake description.

† A small clay pipe.

with a native grace, his battered *caubeen* in one hand, his shillelagh in the other, he sings with true, unaffected pathos, the beautiful words, which he slightly alters for the occasion—

“ We’re bidding you a long farewell,
Our owld friends kind and true ;
But we’ll not forget you, never fear,
In the land you’re going to.
They say there’s bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there,
But don’t forget owld Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair.”

As Denis sings the words, “ But *don’t* forget owld Ireland,” there is a passionate ring in his tones which stirs the hearts of all of us, especially the hearts of those amongst us hailing from the Emerald Isle ; and as he concludes the song, a regular avalanche of copper from the men, and silver from the officers, descends upon him. He picks up the pennies, the sixpences, the shillings, and the half-crowns, rolling and lying around him, and puts them into his *caubeen*, while the bystanders good-naturedly assist him in collecting the remainder of this bountiful largess. When all has been gathered into the battered old *caubeen*, which looks hardly equal to the unusual strain, he holds it up to us and shakes his head.

“ No, no, your honours ; shure I didn’t sing for money *this* time ; ’twas for love. Boys,” he shouts, turning to the crowd, “ boys, here’s to dhrink the health of the owld —th, the sportingest, the freest, and best rigiment that’s ever been here.”

So saying, Denis gives the *caubeen* a sweep round, and immediately converts the adjacent portion of the wharf into a sort of Tom Tiddler’s ground, and so ends the truly Irish episode.

I have been so much occupied in my multifarious duties that I have had no time to think of little Harding ; but just as we are casting off for shore, I catch sight of his mother’s face, and I at once go for’ard to find him, and point her out to him. Poor

creature! it is painful to gaze upon her face. Though still preserving its beauty, there is a quivering about it which is heart-rending to see. She has evidently come down to strain him once more to her breast, and to give him one-last kiss; but she is too late. I soon find the small object of my search. He has seen her, and when I come up to him he neither sees nor hears me. That loved form on shore is the whole world to him, and his eyes are fixed in one intense absorbing gaze.

"Harding," I say, gently putting my hand on his shoulder, "your mother cannot see you. Come with me to where I think we will be able to attract her notice."

He follows me, too crushed with grief to speak, and we are speedily standing side by side on a locker in a conspicuous position. Still she does not see us. Her eyes are eagerly scanning the rows of faces amongst the men forward, where she thinks her little one will most likely be. There is an acquaintance of mine on shore standing near her.

"Fitzgerald!" I sing out to him, "will you ask that lady on your right to look this way?"

"Certainly, old fellow."

But there is no occasion for his services. She catches the tones of my voice at once, and in a moment she sees *him*.

What unspoken words are in that longing gaze! What unfathomable depths of tender yearning love are in those straining eyes!

Little Harding tries hard to gulp down his feelings, but I hear every now and then a half-stifled sob. I continue standing close by him, and place my hand on his shoulder, hoping that she will take the action as a comforting assurance of my intention to befriend and protect her darling. I don't think she does. All senses seemed absorbed in that one longing gaze. I never saw a face so white, and she looks fearfully fragile and delicate.

"Half-speed ahead" is now the order, and the interval between us and the shore rapidly increases, while the strains of "Auld

Lang Syne" fill the air with a soft sad wailing. At least, so it seems to many there. Little Harding now fairly breaks down. He sobs convulsively, and my heart is wrung for the poor child, and the anguish-stricken mother. Her face has become more death-like, and to look at it is to dread some sudden catastrophe. My dread is only too well founded. All of a sudden she totters forward a step, stretches her arms out towards him, screams out "My darling, oh, my darling!" and falls to the earth insensible—or dead it may be, for all we know then.

In one second my hand is on little Harding, holding him tight to prevent him from jumping overboard. With what wondrous strength did that child struggle!

"Oh, let me go! She's dead. Let me go, for pity's sake, let me go," he screamed.

Never shall I forget his face as he implored me, frantically, to let him go. He looked as if reason had fled. So it had, I believe. His bloodshot eyes rolled, his mouth worked, and his face was livid. In vain I tried to pacify him. Suddenly his piteous cry ceases, his face turns blue, the foam gathers on his bloodless lips, and he falls into my arms.

"Stand back there! Clear the way, men, and pass the word for the doctor," I cry out, as I carry him in my arms along the deck. I soon reach the sick bay* and place him in a cot, and there he lies motionless with his small hands still tightly clutching his life. The ports are wide open, and through them there floats, faintly mingling with the rush of waters alongside, the strains of the band on shore which plays, "Come back to Erin."

"Come back to Erin!" My heart is wrung with pity, and I wish to God we could!

* The hospital.

CHAPTER V.

THE shores of "Owld Ireland," had nearly sunk below the horizon before little Harding regained consciousness. It was a bitter awakening. "A fit of an epileptic nature, brought on by intense excitement," was the doctor's definition of the case, and he prescribed rest and quiet for the present. The little patient, however, begged so hard to be allowed to go on deck, to gaze once more on the receding shore, that the doctor, thinking that, perhaps, after all, the fresh sea air would be beneficial, gave his consent.

"I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new."

So sung Lord Byron, and there are few of us who cannot endorse his words. Never, however, have I known a parting under such painful circumstances as that between little Harding and his mother. His last view of her had been as she had fallen to the earth apparently lifeless; and three weary months, at least, must elapse before he could hear any tidings of her. I had but little time, however, to expend in thinking of the boy's woes. There was plenty to be done just at first—telling the men off into watches and messes, stowing away the arms, &c., &c.; and my thoughts were fully occupied with my multifarious duties.

The transport, which was to be our home for more than three months, was a splendid vessel, very different from the old style of tubs in which British troops were forced to risk their lives in their journeys across the deep. In the last fifteen years there has been a wonderful reformation in the transport service. Formerly, anything that could float—and it very often did not even

do that—was good enough for an old “lobster-pot,” as a transport used to be contemptuously termed in those days. But we have changed all that. No expense is now spared to convey our soldiers safely, speedily, and comfortably to and from our many possessions lying beyond the seas. No more striking proof of the excellence of our transports can be adduced than the fact, that when it was considered advisable for the heir-apparent to the throne of this powerful empire to visit the most magnificent of our possessions in suitable state, it was one of this class of vessels which was selected to convey him thither. How different from the days when a transport meant the most worthless vessel in the navy, or a merchant trader too slow or rotten to convey a valuable cargo of merchandise. There is actually an instance on record—and the case is no worse than many others—where a boat, condemned as unworthy to carry pigs between Ireland and Bristol, was taken up for the conveyance of troops. Bearing these things of the past—happily of the past, indeed—in mind, it strikes one as little less than miraculous that there is I believe but one instance on record of the head-quarters of a regiment being lost at sea. At least, I have never been able to hear of another, though I have followed up the subject with numerous old officers.

The transport in which we went to China was not equal in size or magnificence, as I may say, to the regular Indian “troopers” of the present day; but she was, nevertheless, a splendid vessel of 2800 tons, replete with arrangements for the comfort of her passengers. Some of the old hands amongst us, who had previously performed the voyage to India in the old transports of the past, were aghast at the, what seemed to them by comparison, luxuries on board the *Severn*, as our good ship was called. She was one of the first of the new style, and to eyes accustomed to the old class of transport, her size, her accommodation, and her fittings were astounding. Her saloon was large, lofty, and elegantly fitted. Down the centre ran two tables, at which a

hundred people could dine without crowding. The ceiling, under which the tallest grenadier, with his bear-skin on, could have walked erect, was a pure white, ornamented with gold fret-work, and from it, at close intervals, there hung handsome swinging lamps, which not only looked well, but also burnt brilliantly. How different from the single greasy cuddy-lamp of old, which shone so little and smelt so much ! At one end of the saloon was a small marble-topped *buffet*, where liquid refreshments were dispensed as desired. At the stern end were luxurious divan-like settees, covered with red velvet ; and adding still more to the luxurious appearance of this portion of the saloon was a piano, securely lashed to bolts in the floor. On either side of the saloon were ranged the cabins, each one capable of accommodating two occupants with comfort. It was here that the field-officers, the captains, a few of the senior subalterns, and the ladies of the regiment were accommodated ; but the majority of the subalterns were not quite so fortunate, and led a somewhat secluded and dark existence in a lower saloon, which was sometimes called "the cock-pit," sometimes "Pandemonium." It certainly on occasions richly deserved this latter epithet. Boys will be boys, even when they wear long swords by their sides, and fancy themselves very much men ; and many a time have I had to descend into these lower regions, with some such remark on my lips as, "Now, look here, you youngsters, the chief says if you don't kick up less row, he'll have to adopt some strong measures." This generally had the desired effect of at once quelling the riot. It is only fair to add that the crimes and misdemeanours perpetrated in this Pandemonium were never of a more serious nature than a spirited and general bolstering match at bed-time, or a musical performance on combs, with a large tin bath as the big drum.

A long sea voyage is robbed of much of its tediousness when it is undertaken with the head-quarters of your own regiment. In the first place, there is a certain amount of duty to be performed daily, which gives you a greater relish for those leisure hours

which usually hang so heavily on the hands of the ordinary voyager. Then there is the society of men with whom your lot is cast for weal or woe, with whom your pleasures and your hardships will be experienced, and with whom, in short, you have so much in common, that intercourse between you and them cannot but be agreeable, and conversation on subjects of common interest can seldom languish. There is the past, which you have spent together, to chat over; there is the future, which you hope still to spend together, to speculate upon. You are not like a voyager on board an ordinary passenger ship, thrown amongst a lot of strangers, each selfishly thinking of himself and his own affairs; but there you are, with the same men you have known intimately for years, and amongst whom you have made friendships which will be terminated only by death. Lastly, there is a capital band of music, which will lighten the tedium of many an hour.

The following was very much how the time was passed on our voyage out. In the morning, get up at about seven o'clock; tub, a process of some little difficulty when there is much motion of the ship; dress, go on deck, and enjoy the fresh morning breeze, laden with the purest ozone, until the bugle sounds for breakfast at nine o'clock. By this time you are quite prepared to do your duty handsomely towards the good things spread out on the breakfast-table. No longer weevily biscuit as of yore, but bread of yesterday's baking, or, perhaps, even hot rolls fresh and steaming from the oven. If with this foundation, and good tea or coffee, and grills, and curries, and hashes, and potted meats, and marmalade, you cannot make a good meal, it is not the fault of the paymaster, the head steward, and the cook, the triumvirate which rules your gastronomic destinies. You must blame your own fastidiousness or your appetite. After breakfast, if you are a smoker, a walk on deck and a few whiffs of "baccy" will be very enjoyable, and by the time you have shaken out the ashes from your pipe the bugle sounds the "fall in" for parade. Of course

there is no drill ; the men, sometimes in their shirt-sleeves, and with bare legs and feet ; sometimes in full dress, according to order, fall in by companies, each company having a certain portion of the deck assigned to it, which it knows well. They are then inspected by their officers, and have the orders of the day read to them. This altogether takes about half-an-hour, then the colonel proceeds to the orderly-room—just a portion of the troop-deck nearest to the saloon set apart for the purpose—and here he “tells off” prisoners, sees the officers, and transacts any official business of the regiment requiring attention. After this, you have the morning pretty nearly to yourself. You may do a quarter-deck constitutional walk, combined with a chat with a chum ; or you may read on deck in a comfortable cane arm-chair, or write down in the saloon. Or if you are an athlete, you may perch yourself aloft, or play-single-stick until you are black and blue about the legs and arms. With regard to going up the rigging, however, I must warn you that you will have to “pay your footing.” And this is how it's done : you gaze up into the rigging, and are suddenly seized with a desire to know what it all looks like from up there. In your innocence you ascend. You have about reached the crosstrees, when a good deal of grinning goes on amongst the blue-jackets, and also among such of your own comrades as have been initiated into the mystery. Some smart young quartermaster's mate now hastily repairs to a locker, and produces therefrom a stout lanyard. Armed with this, and accompanied by another blue-jacket, he springs into the shrouds, and up they both go after you like greased lightning. By this time you divine their intention, and attempt a confused scrambling escape, amidst much laughter from the deck. But a fly might as well try to escape from the web of a spider after he has got well in it, as you to get away from those two burly sons of Neptune. In a few moments you are helplessly in their grasp, and in a telling pantomime they proceed to demonstrate the use of the stout piece of lanyard, and this you find means nothing more nor

less than lashing you up to the rigging. You expostulate, perhaps, with indignation.

"Beg pardon, sir," says the smart young quartermaster's mate, respectfully but firmly; "can't help it, sir. Custom of the service, sir. But there is a way of getting off, ain't there Bill?"

"Oh yes, there's a way out of it," says Bill, accommodatingly.

"And this way?" you ask.

"Well, you see, sir, as how it's the first time you've been aloft in this ship, and the custom of the service is to tie you up with this here bit of lanyard until you pays your footing."

You beg to be informed of the precise terms which this last expression conveys, and you learn that it means bestowing upon them the wherewithal to purchase sufficient grog for them and their watch to drink your good health in. It is a pity to thwart so kind and polite an attention on their part, and you accordingly "pay your footing," and are then informed, as the lanyard is removed, that you are henceforth "free of the rigging" of this particular ship.

Jack doesn't care what the rank may be of the intruder into these airy and tarry domains of his. I once saw a full colonel caught in their toils, and he had to "pay his footing," just the same as the youngest ensign. One of our youngsters on board the *Severn* certainly escaped Jack and his bit of lanyard, but he did so at a terrible risk and a terrible price. He was on the topmast shrouds when Jack gave chase. He was a good-looking laughing youngster, as nimble as a cat, and he shouted out to us, "Two to one against the blue-jacket." Quietly waiting until the sailor was within a few feet of him, and just as the latter was chuckling over his prize, he laughingly shouted, "Not *this* time, Jack," and sprung on to a guy, by which he slid down to the deck in two seconds. Poor boy! his hands were cut to the bone, but he was as cool and plucky a youngster as ever lived; and he quietly remarked, "*Experientia docet*. I thought myself

up to most dodges in gymnastics, but I have just learned how *not* to come down a rope."

Having distinguished yourself aloft, you will probably wish to explore below, and sooner or later are sure to find yourself in the engine-room and stoke-hole. Here, too, you have to pay your footing to the stokers ; but there is not the same dashing way of doing it in these grimy regions as in the more elevated sphere of the rigging, nor is the accompanying ceremonial so imposing. It mildly consists in having a cross chalked on each of your boots by the officiating stoker. Henceforth you are free of the stoke hole, and may do anything you like in it—anooint yourself, for instance, with engine-grease, or take a header into one of the coal-bunks, or pocket a few hot cinders as a pleasing little memento of your visit, and of the warm reception there accorded you. I admit that I did not avail myself of one of these privileges, but then there is no accounting for tastes.

If it is a fine day—and you have plenty of them in those latitudes, I can tell you—the band is turned up at about eleven o'clock for practice on deck, and many officers prefer spending the hour before lunch in listening to its dulcet strains. As midday draws near, the master, or rather navigating-lieutenant, as he is called now, and his assistants, appear with their sextants, and much interest is evinced by us as we watch them "shooting the sun," as *they* call it ; "taking an observation," as *you* would probably term it. After a great deal of squinting through small lenses and examination of diminutive scales, the navigating-lieutenant suddenly sings out, "Make it eight bells" (twelve o'clock), and the ship's bell at once announces the important fact ; while the navigating-lieutenant himself goes off to the chart-house or his cabin to work out the exact position of the ship.

At this magic moment the bugle sounds that particular call, which, perhaps, of all falls sweetest on the British soldier's ear, and to the tune of which he has adapted these beautiful and pathetic words, "Pick 'em up, pick 'em up, hot potatoes !"

Need I add that I allude to the dinner call? There is one other call which is nearly, though not quite, as welcome to the military ear as the dinner call, and to this one Mars and the Muses in conjunction have composed the following :—

“ There's no parade to-day,
There's no parade to-day,
The adjutant's got the tooth-ache,
The colonel's gone away.”

The name of the warrior bard to whom a military posterity is indebted for these elaborate compositions is buried in that obscurity which it does *not* merit. I do not think it could have been the Duke of Wellington. From a careful perusal of his despatches, I have come to the conclusion that they are not in his style. It could not have been Richard Cœur de Lion, another eminent soldier, for he, like all Englishmen of his period, knew nothing about potatoes, and could, therefore, hardly have penned a stanza containing, as it does, nothing but a stirring injunction to “pick 'em up.” Can it be that the honour of authorship lies with Sir Walter Raleigh? We know that, besides being a sailor, a courtier, and a statesman, he was a soldier and a poet, and he was, likewise, intimately connected with potatoes. But further research in this direction, though deeply interesting no doubt, would be out of place in these pages. Let us then return to that subject from which we digressed, and which I hope possesses in the reader's eyes a still deeper interest than the authorship of “Pick 'em up, pick 'em up, hot potatoes.”

At the same time as the men have their dinners the officers have their luncheon. This is a very light affair: but as dinner is at half-past three o'clock, it is only right and proper, unless there is a rare combination of the ostrich and the alderman in your nature, that it should be so. It is merely, in fact, what is called a “snack,” and consists of biscuits and cheese, and a glass or two of bottled ale. The first thing to be done after this meal, if you may call it one, is to go and examine the result of the navi-

gating-lieutenant's calculations, which is kindly placed for our information in a conspicuous position. By it we can see the exact position of our ship on the chart at twelve o'clock, and also the number of knots we have run since twelve o'clock the previous day. Some of us have charts of our own, on which we trace from day to day the course of our ship, and we at once dot off her position on it, and enter the distance in our private log. *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit*, we think.

The time between lunch and dinner is passed in reading, writing, walking, playing rope quoits, or a game called "bull," which simply consists in pitching flat circular pieces of lead, sewn up in canvas, on to different numbers painted on a square black board about ten paces from you. It is certainly not quite as intellectual a game as chess, neither is it as interesting as billiards; but when in quest of exercise and amusement on board ship, you often find fun in pursuits you would vote very slow on shore.

At about this time you will see, somewhere in the waist of the ship, the quarter-master-sergeant and a few of his pioneers engaged in a mysterious preparation round a large tub; while the subaltern of the day, with his crimson sash across his shoulder to denote that he is on duty, stands looking on, and the soldiers (each man with a little tin pannikin in his hand and a very wistful look in his eye) stand in long files before him. The word is given that all is ready, and then each man in turn, and at the call of his name, steps up to the tub, and holds out his pannikin, which is thereupon filled with that nautical nectar, rum and water. There and then, in the presence of his officer, the poor fellow drinks it off, and then with a tender sigh over the fleeting nature of life's pleasures, and a back-handed movement across his lips, he gives place to the next man behind him. No man is allowed to take his grog away; he must drink it, every drop, at the tub-head; he may not even give it to a comrade. If he does not drink it himself (not much chance of that), it is thrown away. After all the companies have been served, if there is still some of the liquid

left in the tub, it is emptied into the scuppers in the presence of the officer on duty. The reason of all these apparently needless and vexatious precautions is to guard against drunkenness, a crime which, bad enough on shore, is immeasurably more serious on board ship, on account of the danger it involves. A man might save up his daily allowance of grog until he had enough for "a big drink," which generally means intoxication, or he might sell it to or swap it with a comrade. Often, as I have gone through the troop-deck at dinner-time, have I pitied poor Tommy Atkins,* and wished very much that he could have had his pannikin by his side filled with his day's allowance of grog, with which to wash down his salt pork. If it had rested with our colonel and our captain, I think they would have trusted Tommy in this matter; and I do not think that the trust would have been betrayed, except, perhaps, in a very few isolated cases. But it is a rule of the service through which they could not break.

At half-past three o'clock comes the great event of the day, heralded by a flourish of the bugle, which plays the officers' dinner call. Down we all troop into the saloon, and take our seats, which, from custom, we have now a prescriptive right to. Near the captain sit the colonel, the field-officers, and generally a few of the captains; but towards the far-end of the table the youngsters congregate, and here there is generally, during the whole of the meal, one continual merry ring of laughter.

At about five we are once more on deck. *Nunc est fumandum*, and the postprandial pipe is now hardly less an event of importance than the dinner itself. On two or three days in the week, the band comes up on deck at this time, and plays for an hour or so. This is, perhaps, the most enjoyable part of the day, and old B flat, which, the reader may recollect, is the sobriquet of our musical-mad band president, is now in his element. He generally takes his place in the band with his flute, and tootles away with the greatest delight. This sort of thing would hardly

* The generic name for the British private.

do on shore, but on board ship it is very different. At seven o'clock we go down to the saloon, where tea, and toast, and potted delicacies await us. After tea some read or write, some adjourn to the lower end of the saloon, where the piano is, and spend a harmonious evening; and some prefer sitting on deck, smoking and yarning to each other in sociable little knots. Many a wondrous tale is now unfolded by the old hands to the youngsters. At ten or half-past, voracious monsters that we are—rendered so, I suppose, by the constant supply of pure sea air we are taking into our lungs—we go in for a sort of supper, and at a little after eleven all lights in the saloon are extinguished. So ends the day, except for the subaltern on watch, and a few of those restless spirits of the night who think retiring to rest at eleven o'clock unbearable, and who will remain on deck for some hours longer, and then have to go to bed in the dark.

Breaking in upon this by no means unpleasant routine which I have sketched were occasional incidents, which at sea are always so much relished, such as a whale alongside, a passing vessel, the capture of a shark, or of an albatross. There was always great excitement over either of these last two incidents. Directly a shark was discerned, a shark-line and hook was at once got ready, the latter being baited with a lump of salt pork. It was very hard, however, to catch one of these brutes, or indeed any fish, when the ship was under steam. No matter how tempting a morsel the bait may have looked to him, the sight of it going through the water at about ten knots an hour was too suspicious a circumstance to be overlooked. But when the ship was under easy sail, we frequently hauled our prize on board amidst intense excitement. The albatrosses, too, afforded us at times some sport. It sounds rather anomalous to talk of catching birds with a fish-hook and line; nevertheless such were the means we adopted for catching these feathered monsters. Having hooked one, it was hard work, I can tell you, hauling our prize on board, and was as much as three or four of us could manage. One that we

caught in this way measured close upon twelve feet across the wings. On being brought on deck, they emit through the nostrils an oily fluid, or "are sea-sick," as one of our youngsters said, and are quite unable to walk on the smooth boards. They are daring and powerful brutes, and by no means favourites with sailors. Many a wretched man who has fallen overboard, and who would have been saved, has fallen a prey to these birds. One blow of their powerful beak is quite sufficient to send it through a man's brain, and this is their method of dispatching their human prey. Unmindful of the fate of the ancient mariner, we also shot one or two of these animals, and, for the benefit and confusion of the superstitious, I beg to add that the remainder of the voyage was in every way highly prosperous. One of the diversions (?) of a voyage round the Cape used to be the strange revelries held on crossing the line. I am glad to say we had none of that nonsense on board our ship. The senseless buffoonery and rough horse-play, often degenerating into sheer brutality, which used to take place on this occasion, finds little favour now. It is a custom, I am happy to say, now more honoured in the breach than the observance.

Sometimes "the even tenor of our serenity," as a poet says, would receive a rude shock. Let us suppose the hour is between lunch and dinner-time. Calmness, not to say lassitude, reigns throughout the ship. Some of us are lying about on the lockers reading, others are gathered together in sociable little knots; some are writing to the dear ones at home, others are dreaming of them in midday *siestas*; some are exploring the engine-room below, others are perched up high aloft. All of a sudden the "fire alarm" sounds, and, like magic, the appearance of things is changed. In a wondrous short time, everyone throughout the ship, from the captain to the cabin-boy, from the colonel to the drummer, is at his post. The company "for fire duty this week," as already detailed in the regimental orders, is at once in readiness with hoses, etc.; the other companies fall in opposite the boats

they have been told off to ; the head-steward and his assistants are down in the store-room ready to hand up provisions for the boats ; the doctors hasten to the sick bay to look after the patients ; and our instructor of musketry, the only officer who has not company duties to attend to, draws his sword, buckles on a loaded revolver, and stands guard over the spirit-room, his orders being to cut down or shoot any man trying to force his way into it. There is no confusion ; each man and boy knows from experience where to go, and goes there. At the first alarm, none of us, but the captain and the colonel, know whether it is a false or a real one, and we are naturally not sorry when we find out that it is the former, which, of course we are not very long in doing. As soon as we are all at our places, which is a matter of only a few minutes, the captain and the colonel go round the ship to see that the orders have been rigidly observed. After this inspection is over, we are dismissed, and resume the several occupations which were suddenly interrupted. I noticed that the captain and colonel invariably chose the moments for this little excitement when we looked most listless and lazy.

I hope the reader will not find this account of military ship life prosy and tedious. My object in giving it is to bring before his mind's eye a mode of life of which, in all probability, he has had no experience, but which he has often heard voted as slow and wearisome. My sketch is an exact transcript of our existence on board, and he may judge for himself whether we had much cause to grumble.

All in all, we were a happy ship ; but there was one grievously sore heart amongst us—a very young heart, which beat beneath a drummer's jacket, and which, instead of being bruised and galled, should have been full of youthful exuberance and aspirations. I, of course, allude to little Harding. He sunk into a low desponding state, and many a time did I come upon him in some secluded place, gazing with dim and yearning eyes on his mother's likeness, which he carried in a locket round his neck, and, I believe, wore

night and day. He was haunted by one sickening dread, that he should arrive at Hong Kong only to hear of her death. Poor little fellow, I dare say he had a rough time of it with the other boys, who, of course, could not, in their youthful thoughtlessness and—without any disparagement to them—coarser natures, enter into his feelings. But he never complained to me ; a tale-bearer was one of the last characters little Harding would have figured in. I did my utmost to rouse him. At the different places where we touched, I generally managed that he should go ashore, and in many other ways I tried to raise his spirits ; but I felt that nothing could cure that melancholy which had fastened on his young soul with so cold a grasp, but the receipt of good news from his mother on our arrival at Hong Kong, where we all hoped to find letters awaiting us.

On the one hundred and third day of our voyage, we cast anchor in the magnificent harbour of Hong Kong. My duties at once took me ashore, and at the barracks I found a pile of letters awaiting the regiment. There were a great many for myself. Amongst them, to my great satisfaction, was one from little Harding's mother, enclosing one—what a thick one it was !—for him. The letter to me was merely an apology for the liberty she deemed she was taking in writing to her boy under cover to me ; but she had done so, she said, as she thought he would get it sooner. Knowing how many hearts—gentle and simple alike—were yearning for news from home, I transacted my business with all possible despatch, and made for the ship. My return on board created an immense sensation. On nearing the ship, in the boat I had held up my bag, and they all knew I was the bearer of "important despatches." My foot was no sooner on the deck than I was surrounded. I handed the officers' letters in a lump to the first one who held out his hand, and those for the non-commissioned officers and men I gave to the sergeant-major to be distributed to the orderly-sergeants of companies, who, in their turn, would hand them over to their respective owners.

I then sent my orderly to find Drummer Harding, and tell him to come to me at once. In a very short time he approached with the air of one expecting the sentence of death to be pronounced upon him. He was deathly pale, and his hand, raised to the salute, was trembling like an aspen leaf. He had not dared to look in my face as he approached, or he would have read, "good news" in it.

"There, Harding, there's a letter for you from your mother. Now, cheer up, my little man," I said, as I gave him the precious document.

With a rush the colour came into his face, and I never shall forget his "Oh, thank God!" as he took the letter and hurried off, quite forgetting, poor little fellow, all about his salute, a matter he was always so punctilious about.

I saw nothing more of little Harding until after our dinner. The band was then had up on deck to play for the last time on board the old *Severn*, which, thanks to her own good qualities and the good qualities of her officers, had been such a comfortable home to us, and had carried us so well and swiftly through the perils of the deep. Old B flat was equal to the occasion. He beckoned to the band-sergeant, and whispered something into that non-commissioned officer's musical ear. In a few moments, awakening a regular buzz of delight throughout the ship, the band strikes up gaily—

" Good news from home, good news for me
Has come across the dark blue sea,
From friends that I have left in tears.
From friends that I'll not see for years."

Amongst the rank and file crowding aft to listen to the strains, I caught sight of little Harding. "Good news from home" had indeed wrought a change in him.

CHAPTER VI.

WE disembarked the following day, and at once took up our quarters in the handsome stone barracks near the landing-place. We made rather a bad start at Hong Kong. Before leaving the ship, one of our men was heard to say he would have a drink that night which would make up for the three months' abstention on board; such a drink, he said, as he had never had before, and would never have again in his life. Poor creature, he kept his word in a ghastly manner. That very night he died in his bed in the barrack-room* from the effects of *samshu*.†

In contrast to this dark episode, was a little circumstance which occasioned the greatest amusement amongst the officers of the regiment, and led to a poor young ensign being most unmercifully "chaffed." On the very day of our departure from Ireland, a large box arrived for the young ensign in question, with a few lines from his grandmother, telling him it was her parting gift, but not in any way alluding to the nature of its contents. This box was a most horrible embarrassment to its owner. There was no time for him to unpack it, and it was very hard to know how to get it off to the ship. Everyone who had anything to do with it abused the box. The colonel abused it, because he had promised the captain of the ship to have all the heavy luggage on board early the previous day, and here at the last moment was a great packing-case of a concern turning up; I abused it, the quartermaster abused it; and I've no doubt the fatigue party, who finally took it off to the ship, abused it all the way down to the wharf. Then when it got on board it was received with a round of abuse from the first lieutenant, who at first flatly refused to have anything to do with it, as all the heavy baggage had already been stowed away in ship-shape fashion. Finally, however, he relented, and

* Fact.

† A cheap and villanous spirit sold by the Chinese to the soldiers and sailors.

"that blessed old box of Spooner's," as it had been termed the whole morning, was tumbled down into the hold. All the voyage out Ensign Spooner worked himself up into a high state of expectation, which was freely shared by his brother officers, and "I wonder what's in that box of Spooner's!" was a very frequent ejaculation. Its three months' incarceration seemed to have done it but little good. On being liberated on its arrival at Hong Kong, Spooner's box behaved in a way worthy of its reputation. It first of all slipped away from the rope, by which it was being hauled up from the hold, and tumbled back upon the top of my portable tub, the lid of which it kindly stove in for me. Then when it was got on deck the first thing it did was to crush a sailor's toe, the next to jam a soldier's finger. Then when it was being taken away it managed to wriggle from the hands of two Chinamen, and all but went through the bottom of the boat alongside. Its next exploit was on shore, and this was to tear the major's trousers with a protrusive nail, and a little later on, when the subaltern in command of the baggage fatigue party, wearied out with his duties, sought a temporary resting-place upon it, Spooner's box resented the liberty of being sat upon with another protrusive nail. Finally, when it was being conveyed into Ensign Spooner's room, it seized upon the opportunity, while it was being borne past the door, to shove one of its corners viciously through the panel. "That blessed box of Spooner's!" A goodly number of us thronged the room to witness the opening ceremony.

"I rather suspect," said Spooner, as with heightened colour and flashing eyes, he stood ready for the attack, armed with a gigantic chisel and hammer. "I rather suspect it's a saddle and bridle, and horse clothing complete, for my grandmother is not the one to do things by halves."

She had, however, on this occasion—*very much by halves*. After labouring through several outer casings of wood and zinc, general expectation rising with each one, we at last arrived at a piece of paper resting on the top of numerous small tin canisters.

On the paper was inscribed the following :—

“ Fifty pounds of the best tea, done up in half-pound tins, for my dear grandson.

“ Oh, when you drink this fragrant tea,
I hope, my dear, you'll think of me ;
And when, my dear, you think of me,
I hope you'll drink this fragrant tea.”

There was a general spluttering and a rush from Spooner's room. We did not like to hurt Spooner's feelings, and we wanted to have our merriment out. In a mob we made for the ante-room, which at once resounded with roars of laughter.

“ I knew that blessed box of Spooner's would sell us all to the very last,” said old B flat, who had attended its opening in the hopes that it might contain some musical instrument.

Tea to China ! Was there ever, we thought, so flagrant a case of carrying coals to Newcastle ; and we laughed till our sides ached, and the tears streamed down our cheeks.

I am bound to admit, however, in justice to the old lady, that we subsequently found out that she had not been guilty of such a piece of folly after all. The tea kept for consumption in China is quite different from that made up for the foreign markets, and, as we had been accustomed to the latter all our lives, we soon found out that we enjoyed Spooner's tea more than any we could get in Hong Kong. I also feel bound to add that Spooner behaved with profuse hospitality, and Spooner's afternoon five o'clock teas became for some time quite a regimental institution. On these occasions we always drank to the health of Spooner's grandmother, in cups of fragrant tea, and when he wrote and told her this, she was very proud, and wrote back to say we were “ all dear boys.” She was sorry to hear of the late arrival of the box, but explained that the delay was owing to the composition of the poetry, which had occupied her for several days.

We had not been in Hong Kong many days, when an incident occurred of which little Harding was a central figure. I was returning homewards one afternoon from a ride when, as I was



"The tail came off in my hand."—p. 207

going along a secluded road by the sea-shore, I heard a childish shout of "Oh sir, please sir, help me to catch him," and on looking round beheld about a hundred yards off, the extraordinary spectacle of little Harding in a state of nature, wildly careering over the shingle and the sharp rocks after a Chinaman, who, with his pig-tail streaming out behind him like the pennon of a man-of-war, was rapidly distancing his small pursuer. In a moment I jumped off my horse, and joined hotly in the pursuit. A stern chase is a long chase, they say, and this one proved no exception to the general rule. The Chinaman took to the rocks, and on this sort of foothold he had, with his paper-soled shoes, a great advantage over me, with my spurs and chain straps on. However, on getting on to a little more open ground, I put on a tremendous spurt and rapidly came up with the object of my chase. For about fifty yards my hand was outstretched to catch him by his tail.

"If I could only just get hold of that pig-tail," I thought, "I should have him."

But that celestial appendage seemed to be to me what the tempting fruit was to Tantalus. Over and over again did I think that it was within my reach, and that I had just got it, but it always eluded my grasp. At last, with a cry of triumph I seized it in a vice-like grip. How short-lived was my triumph! The tail came off in my hand, leaving just a little tuft on the head it had so recently adorned, and with an exclamation of "Hi-yah" the Chinaman bounded off with renewed vigour, and apparently very little regret for the tail he had left behind him. For a moment or two, of which the Chinaman made the best possible use with his legs, I stood dumbfounderedly looking at the tail in my hand, and then, recovering myself, at once resumed the chase. Once more I was up with him, but I began to feel that if I did not catch him in a few moments, I should lose him altogether.

Three months on board ship is not the best sort of training for a race like this, and I was horribly out of condition. Throwing every effort of nerve and muscle into a few strides, I at last

managed to collar him, and hold him as my prisoner. For some moments we stood looking at each other, captor and captive, both panting, and too much out of breath to speak. He was by no means an Adonis. His usually sallow complexion was now of a corpse-like hue from over exertion and fear; his eyes were just two little slits which puzzled you to know how he could see out of them; his nose, when you looked at his profile, was entirely hidden by his cheek bone, and his face was deeply pitted with small-pox. Even amongst Chinamen you would have picked him as notably plain.

"Well, my beauty, I wonder what I've been chasing you for, until I feel as if I would never get my breath again," thought I, as I gazed on my captive, and noted all the above particularities of feature.

"My no hab makee pylong," he observed, as if he had read my thoughts.

"Aha, my celestial friend," I soliloquized, "*qui s'excuse s'accuse*."

"My no hab makee pylong," when rendered into proper English, being, "I've stolen nothing."

"Why for you makee run 'way, then?" I said.

"Why for you makee run allo same after me?" he asked, with somewhat disconcerting effect; for upon my word I didn't exactly know, though I had taken a great deal of trouble about it.

"We'll soon see," I said, "come along;" and I dragged him towards little Harding, who of course had been left a long way behind in the chase, and was now making the best of his way to us.

In a short time the little fellow came up, panting, and with his naked feet cut and bleeding.

"Oh, please, sir, I'm so glad, sir, you've got him," he gasped out in breathless accents. "He's got a locket my mother gave me with her likeness in it."

"Has he, by jingo. Give it up, you rascal," I said, tightening my grip of his collar, and administering a vigorous shaking just

to let him know how thoroughly he was in my power, and that I'd stand no nonsense.

"My no hab got," he said.

"Oh yes, he has. I was bathing, and I saw him go to my clothes and take it from where I put it. He must have been watching me from behind some rock near. Oh, what shall I do if I've lost it. He may have thrown it away as he ran, and we may not be able to find it again."

"No, I don't think he can have done that," I said. "I should have noticed the action if he had. You may depend upon it, he's got it hidden away somewhere about him; and if he won't give it up we'll search him."

So saying, I at once proceeded to act on my words. "There is no need of a search warrant in this case," I soliloquized; "the inborn dignity of a Briton carries sufficient authority with it. Oh gracious! oh—h——h!"

So ended my soliloquy, that is to say, in a deep groan, and the inborn dignity of a Briton was exemplified by me in a completely doubled-up position, both hands pressing with passionate fervour a certain portion of my frame, and my mouth wide open, gasping for dear breath.

Reader, have you ever known what it is to have a Chinaman's head, or indeed any head; dashed with fearful force into that region of your body generally covered by the third and fourth waistcoat buttons, counting from the top? If you have not, then rest content with my word that it is not nice, and that I would sooner any day of the week accept a cheque for five pounds. To be candid, it is a most painful proceeding, and for some minutes effectually debars you from an active participation in the affairs of life.

I had relaxed my hold for the purpose of searching the captive, who seizing the opportunity for one last effort to secure his freedom and his booty, had adopted the above tactics with, as far as I myself was concerned, perfect success. I let go my hold on him altogether, and was completely powerless. "*Tantene animis*

celestibus ira?" I might have said or thought with tolerable pertinence; but I did neither. To say anything at all requires a certain amount of breath, and every particle of that useful commodity had been dashed out of my body, and, when you feel as if the lower part of your chest in front had been driven through your backbone behind, it is hard to think of anything else. Had it depended solely on my exertions, my celestial assailant would have got away. I could not have lifted a finger to stop him. I was, for the time being, completely *hors de combat*. But little Harding was equal to the occasion. Just as John Chinaman, after having settled me with so little ceremony, was springing off, Harding threw himself forward, and twining his arms round the other's legs, held on like grim death. In vain the Chinaman tried to free his limbs from the childish grasp. The brute, with his long nails, like eagles' talons, tried to gouge Harding's eyes out, but the plucky little fellow managed somehow to defend himself without letting go his hold. I felt I was as yet quite unequal to a prolonged effort; in fact, I was dead sick and faint, but I thought I could muster up enough strength for just one vigorous application of that truly British weapon, the fist. Besides, I was exasperated and roused to exertion by the sight of the creature tearing the English boy's white flesh with his long claws like a wild beast. Clenching my fist, I caught him what boys call "a one-er" just behind the ear, and sent him sprawling to the ground with a loud "Hi-yah!" which is always a Chinaman's note of exclamation, in pleasure as well as in pain. The intelligent reader will doubtless perceive that on this occasion it was uttered under the latter circumstances. I then sat on him until I felt better. In a couple of minutes I was able to prosecute the search, with little Harding's assistance, and without any opposition on the part of John Chinaman, who seemed to have a wholesome dread of my fist after its recent telling execution. In vain, for some time, did we search his garments for the missing treasure, and little Harding's face wore a look of blank despair.

At last, in a cunningly contrived little pocket in his jacket, just under his armpit—a receptacle evidently meant for the secretion of stolen valuables—we found what we sought. With a cry of delight, Harding snatched the locket, and gazed on the miniature inside. For a couple of moments I caught sight of the sweet sad face which, after the contemplation of the Chinaman's villanous physiognomy, looked doubly sweet and pure.

As soon as Harding had regained his treasure, he hurried off to don his clothes. His face and his shoulders were terribly scored with the Chinaman's nails, and his feet, where they had been cut by the sharp rocks over which he had run, were bleeding. He thought nothing, however, of these wounds in his delight at recovery of what he prized most of all his small worldly possessions, and what he had thought had been lost to him for ever. He very soon got into his clothes, and then came up to thank me for my timely assistance.

What to do with our captive was now a perplexing question. He himself was in favour, and perhaps not unnaturally so, of instant liberation, now that we had relieved him of his booty. But I failed to see the matter in his light, and chose, rather for my guidance, the maxim laid down by that juvenile offender, in the following vigorous couplet, which he composed in jail :—

“ He who prigs vot isn't his'n
Ven he's cotched 'll go to pris'n.”

For the benefit of my prisoner I rendered this as follows :—“ One piecee man makee pylong what no belong him; when can catchee, whilo him plisonside.” He merely muttered “Hi-yah” doubtfully, as if I had failed to convince him of the propriety of this course. Notwithstanding my firm determination that the ends of justice should not be defeated, I did not much relish dragging my captive the whole way into the town. Luckily, I saw going along the road in the distance, a policeman with two Chinese coolies as prisoners, and I hailed him to stop. In a few moments I gave

my captive into his charge ; and seeing his method of taking his other two prisoners off to durance vile was by their pig-tails, which he had tied together and held in his hand, I recounted my own recent experience, and asked for an explanation, which was given as follows. When a Chinaman wishes to become a professional thief, the first preparation, generally speaking, is to cut off his pig-tail—knowing, as he does, how conveniently the appendage offers itself to the hand of the pursuer and captor—and cunningly plaits a false one on the old stump. The advantages of this device were fully exemplified in my case. From what the policeman told me, I concluded that his two original prisoners—about the genuineness of whose pig-tails there was no doubt—could not have been regular professional thieves, but rather a couple of wretched creatures who had yielded to sudden impulses of dishonesty. I found out afterwards, however, that the premises on which I came to this conclusion, were not altogether right. Many a Chinaman, no matter how morally degraded he may be, will endure anything sooner than cut off his beloved pig-tail. The affection a Chinaman bears to his pig-tail, is portrayed with a beautiful tenderness in a certain ditty in which a Chinese gentleman, by the name of Ching Hoti, is asked by a lady, whom he adores, to prove his devotion to her by cutting off his pig-tail. The agonies of mind this request entails on the hapless swain, are thus touchingly described :—

“ What ! cut off his pig-tail, his pride and delight,
That through all his afflictions had clung to him tight ?
Oh, no, ere they'd part he would breathe his last breath,
And Ching Hoti himself would be cut off by death.”

After harrowing our feelings in this way, the poet goes on to tell us that—

“ Through the loss of his heart he had grown thin and pale,
What then must ensue on the loss of his tail ?
He felt that to cut off one lock with the knife,
Would prove the last act, the tail-piece of his life.”

Notwithstanding all this, the maiden is inexorable. She insists in her unreasonable and cruel demands, until Ching Hoti, frenzied by conflicting emotions,

“ Seized on his pig-tail in sheer desperation,
And cut it right off in a cold perspiration.”

No sooner had the dire act been perpetrated, than the wretched man is seized with pangs of remorse, which he is unable to endure, and, we are told that he,—

“ Selecting a branch which gave him full scope,
Hung himself by his pig-tail instead of a rope.”

This will give the reader some idea of the estimation in which a true Chinaman holds his pig-tail. Little Harding's thief, it would appear from this, must have been a very hardened rascal, and we were only too glad to transfer him from our hands to the policeman's.

While all this had been taking place, my trusty steed had been quietly browsing by the roadside, instead of making off to his stable, as many a less thoughtful animal would have done.

Little Harding, I noticed, though he tried hard to keep up his usual military bearing, limped painfully. His face bore deep traces of the Chinaman's handiwork, and his white cotton tunic (we had just taken summer clothing into wear) was discoloured with blood oozing from the deep scratches on his shoulders and back. I felt the little fellow deserved a few words of commendation for the pluck which he had undoubtedly shown, and which I had been delighted to see.

“ Well done, Harding,” I said, “ you held on to that fellow right well.”

“ Do you think I did, sir ? ” he said, looking up with a bright, sparkling expression of pleasure, and for some moments he forgot all about his cut feet, and assumed such a martial bearing that he was in danger of tumbling backwards at every step. Before we

had proceeded a hundred yards, however, it was evident that his thick ammunition boots were galling his lacerated feet, and causing him great pain.

"Now, Harding," I said, "I'm going to put you on my horse."

"Oh no, sir, thank you, I can walk," he said, stoutly.

"Not a bit of it; up you go," and before he knew where he was, I took him under the arms, and popped him into the saddle.

As I walked alongside holding the bridle, I asked him how he was getting on, and if he were happy. There was never a more truthful child, I should think, than little Harding, and yet I fear he did not strictly adhere to the truth when he said, "Yes, sir," in reply to my latter query. He was evidently very home-sick still, and very naturally so. I know *I* was, at times, for some months after first joining at a foreign station many thousand miles away from home, and I was then nearly eighteen years old, while little Harding was barely twelve, and had left home under peculiarly unhappy and trying circumstances.

"You like reading, don't you, Harding?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now that we have settled down comfortably, you may come any afternoon, or every afternoon if you like it, and read in my room. I've plenty of books there, and you may also write your letters home there. It will be nice and quiet for you."

Little Harding turned his face away for a few moments, as he said, "Thank you, sir."

"And what do you do with yourself, Harding, by way of amusement?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm very fond of taking long walks in the country by myself, sir."

"And that's what you were doing to day, eh?"

"Yes, sir; and then I felt rather tired and hot, and sat down on the rock; and the sea looked so nice and cool, that I thought I'd like a bathe, and that's how that Chinaman got hold of my locket."

By this time we had reached the outskirts of the town, where there were plenty of public chairs for hire, and into one of them I put Harding. These chairs are the ordinary conveyance in Hong Kong. They are, generally speaking, simply a large cane arm-chair, with a green shade or canopy over it, slung on a couple of bamboo poles, and carried by two or four coolies, according to the weight of the occupant. Little Harding did not, of course, require the full complement of bearers, and his two chair-coolies laughed merrily as they whipped him up, and trotted off in a high state of amusement at the light weight of their burthen. I rode alongside, and in this way we soon reached the military hospital. Here Harding had his scratches and cuts dressed by the assistant-surgeon on duty, who detained him in the hospital; and there I left the little fellow in what the American humourist, Mark Twain, calls "a stylish suit of sticking-plaster."

CHAPTER VII.

IN a very few days little Harding was off the sick list; in fact, it was only for the sake of appearances that he was kept in the hospital at all. Had it been a few months later, towards the close of the summer, he would not have got off so easily. At this time of the year in Hong Kong, a wound no matter how slight, scarcely ever heals until the sickly season is over. Even the most trivial cut may become a dangerous inflammation.

The cricket-ground was in the immediate vicinity of the barracks, and we lost no time in commencing our cricketing campaign.

How often do we hear, especially at country inns in summer time, the praises of cricket hymned in every key. Of all its glorious attributes, that one most harped upon, perhaps, is, that it brings the peer and the peasant together. That it does so, and

with benefit to each class, is undoubted. The two extremes of society, the highest and the lowest, often meet in a friendly game of cricket, and it is to the former, perhaps, that the more valuable lesson is given.

“ It teaches them that they are flesh and blood ;
It also gently hints to them that others,
Although of clay, are yet not quite of mud ;
That urns and pipkins are but fragile brothers.”

It is much the same in the army. Cricket, “the noble game of cricket,” as its admirers love to call it, brings the officers and privates together, and does much to strengthen that admirable feeling which exists* between the officers and men of our army.

In every English regiment there is cricket, more or less, in due season, and any man wishing to practise and play with the officers always receives the greatest encouragement to do so. If the officers are practising, and a private chooses to come and field out, he will have his innings in due course, as certain as if he were the colonel of the regiment or the captain of the officers' eleven. Many a young soldier—officer or private—has been kept out of mischief by a fondness for, and a proficiency in, cricket. I have known of more cases than one, where a young officer has been taken on the staff of a general officer as aide-de-camp because he was a first-rate cricketer. What good would cricket be in a battle-field or a campaign? I dare say you would ask; and what recommendations that these youngsters would make good staff-officers were there in their proficiency as cricketers? Cricket, in the abstract, I reply, would certainly be no use; but the quickness of eye, the coolness, the activity, the muscle, the practice of taking in surroundings at a glance, all of which are required in a good cricketer, would be very valuable qualities in a staff-officer on active service. But I am not supposed to be writing an

* Perhaps I should say “*did* exist.” In the present short service system, there is hardly time for the growth of the old feeling between officer and man.

essay on cricket. I simply want to tell you that we played it very much in Hong Kong, with, in that unhealthy station, much benefit to ourselves, physically as well as morally.

Harding was a constant attendant at the cricket-field, and the little fellow won the esteem and good-will of every one of the officers in the regiment. His popularity even extended to some of the civilians with whom we were intimate. One of the leading merchants in the place, who used to play cricket with us, took a great fancy to the boy, and, when he had heard an outline of his history from me, offered to purchase his discharge, educate him, and, as soon as he was old enough, provide him with a lucrative appointment in his own house of business. This offer, opening up as it did a certain road to prosperity, in all likelihood to great wealth, I felt bound to lay before Harding, with every argument I could use to induce him to accept it, though I should have been indeed loth to part with him. But the little fellow, though deeply grateful for the gentleman's kindness, scorned the idea of deserting his colours.

His life in the barrack-room was hardly as smooth, as the following incident will show. One morning I was going to the orderly-room, to be in readiness for the colonel, who was expected a few minutes later to "tell off" prisoners. About the door there was the usual crowd of non-commissioned officers and orderlies, etc., standing about, and as I passed through the throng amidst the usual salutes, I stopped short for a moment, with a half-suppressed exclamation of surprise on my lips. There, in the midst of the long row of prisoners, guarded on either flank by a sentry with a drawn bayonet, was little Harding. As our eyes met, his face flushed crimson and he hung his head. Feeling quite distressed at seeing my *protégé* under such unexpected and discreditable circumstances, I passed into the orderly-room, and at once examined the Regimental Guard Report, on which the charges against all the prisoners of that day were duly entered, to discover with what particular misdemeanour Harding stood

charged. I soon found the entry against his name. It ran as follows: "Fighting in the barrack-room with Drummer Smith."

"It might have been worse," thought I, with some feeling of relief. At this moment, the colonel and several officers in whose companies there happened to be prisoners, entered, and the duty of telling off the culprits was at once proceeded with. Prisoner after prisoner was marched in bareheaded under escort, his crime read out to him, evidence heard on both sides, and sentence pronounced, all with wonderful smoothness and rapidity, but still with strict justice.

"Drummers Harding and Smith," at last cried out the sergeant-major, who held the list of prisoners in his hand, and summoned them in severe and much-dreaded tones to the seat of justice.

In prompt obedience to the mandate, the two juvenile delinquents were marched in bareheaded, and made to face the colonel side by side, while towering above them stood the sentry with his drawn bayonet. There could not have been a greater contrast than the two boys presented. Smith was a thick-set plebeian-looking youngster, fully two years older than Harding, with small cunning eyes, about one of which I noticed, with some inward satisfaction, a few rainbow-like tints, and a little pug nose, which bore traces of having recently had its claret tapped. By his late antagonist's side, Harding looked a perfect little gentleman, notwithstanding the drummer's uniform and the position he now stood in. He, too, bore some traces of the fray—a bruise on the cheek, and a red bump on the forehead. As I have said before, he was an universal favourite amongst the officers. All eyes in the orderly-room were upon him, and the poor little fellow hung his head terribly abashed.

"Now, Corporal Watts, state what you know of this," said the colonel to the principal witness, who stood waiting to give his evidence.

"If you please, sir, I'm corporal in charge of the drummer's

room. Yesterday afternoon, I heard a scuffling at the far end of the room. I found the prisoners fighting. I confined them both."

"Now, what have you boys got to say for yourselves, eh?" said the colonel.

Harding kept his eyes on the ground, and said nothing; but Smith, who before enlistment had been a little London street Arab, and retained a considerable amount of the assurance of the class, made an elaborate defence.

"If you please, sir," said Drummer Smith, "I won't go for to tell you no lies. Me and 'im was 'avin' some words. 'I beg your pardon, Drummer 'Arding,' I says, 'don't go for to address me in that there way, for it 'urts my feelings,' I says. With that he ups with his fist, and gives me this here black heye. 'Oh, Drummer 'Arding,' I says, 'the commanding oficer wouldn't approve of such conduct,' I says. With that he ups with his fist again, and gives me a blow on the nose, which I haven't washed it a puppus that you may see I'm tellin' the truth."

Here Drummer Smith emphatically drew attention to this last statement by placing his finger on his little pug nose, and flattening it to his face. Having paused for effect, he continued :—

"'Please, Drummer 'Arding,' I says, 'you hadn't ought to be so free with your fist, for you've not only 'urted my feelings, but you've been and gone and 'urted my nose.' With that he runs his 'ead up agin mine, and gives himself a bump on his forehead, which you may see by the red mark on it that I'm tellin'——"

"Hold your tongue, sir, we've had quite enough of this. I'll have something more to say to you presently. Now, Drummer Harding, haven't you a word to say for yourself? Who struck the first blow?"

"I did, sir," said Harding.

At this reply there was, in the language of the police reports, a sensation. We had all thought it would turn out that, at all events, Harding had not been the aggressor.

"Why, this is not a quarrelsome boy, is he, drum-major?" asked the colonel.

"No, sir, not in the least. He's the best behaved boy we've got, sir," said the drum-major, stoutly.

"Why did you strike the boy, then, Harding?" asked the colonel.

"If you please, sir," said the small prisoner, "I—I—I'd sooner not tell you, if you please, sir. But I *did* strike him first, and we fought, and the corporal marched us both off to the guard-room."

"Yes, yes, we know all that. But what I want to know is, why did you strike this boy first? What had he done or said?"

Little Harding fidgeted about, glanced at me imploringly, and maintained silence. Drummer Smith thought he saw his opportunity, and cut in.

"All I said, sir, was, 'Beggin' your pardon, Drummer 'Arding, I——'"

"Hold your tongue," said the colonel, "you've said quite enough. Now, Harding, why did you strike him?"

There was no reply.

"Very well. I must punish you if you won't tell me."

"If you please, sir, I've some boys outside who can throw some light on the subject, I think," said the drum-major, who evidently took a keen interest in the case for Harding's sake.

"Very well, bring them in, one at a time."

"Drummer Harrison," called out the drum-major, and in marched a clean, smart-looking little fellow, who saluted, and then stood up, motionless, awaiting interrogation.

"Now, Drummer Harrison, tell me what you know about these two boys fighting"

"Well, sir, me and some other of the boys was sitting on the bed-board, after tea yesterday afternoon, listening to Drummer Harding reading to us."

"Does he often do that?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, yes, sir, nearly every day. He reads as well as the chaplain, and the adjutant's given us a lot of books."

"Well, go on."

"Well, we was sitting listening, when up comes Drummer Smith. 'Hallo! what's mammy-sick a-reading of?' he says. 'I won't be called that name by you,' says Drummer Harding. 'Won't you?' says Drummer Smith. 'Oh yes, you will, if I choose,' he says, and keeps on saying 'mammy-sick' over and over again, and makes believe to be crying; and then he takes up a tin of blacking, and makes believe it's a photograph as Drummer Harding's got in a sort of gold case; and, 'Oh,' says he, looking at it, 'this here's what I wears round my neck. Oh, isn't she pretty! Oh, my eye, ain't she beautiful! And Billy-oh! ain't she dressed like a lady, just!' On this Drummer Harding goes up to Drummer Smith, and he says, 'Look here, I don't so much care what you says to me, but I won't have you say one disrespectful word about my mother.' 'Won't you?' says Drummer Smith; 'but you'll have to if I likes,' and he says something, and then Drummer Harding catches him a one-er in the eye, and then Drummer Smith fetches Drummer Harding a crack over the head, and Drummer Harding catches him a whopper on the nose, and then a stunner on the——"

"Yes; well, never mind the details," said the colonel, for the narrator was getting carried away by the exciting theme. "In short, they fought, eh?"

"Yes, sir, and Drummer Smith had just about enough of it when the corporal came up, and confined them both."

Two other boys, eye-witnesses of the affair, were then examined separately, and each corroborated Drummer Harrison's statement.

"Now, Drummer Harding," said the colonel, "although I don't approve of fighting and all that sort of thing, still you received such provocation that, taking into consideration your youth, I have not a word of blame for you. I dismiss the charge against

you altogether, and it won't be entered at all in the defaulter's sheet, and I'll also erase it from the guard report."

"Thank you, sir," said Harding, an immense load evidently off his mind.

"Now, as for you, Drummer Smith, I'll punish you severely for telling lies."

"Oh, sir ; no, sir."

"I say, yes, sir. There's an old saying, that if you spare the rod you'll spoil the child. Now, there is hardly a fault in a boy where I am less inclined to be lenient, or more inclined to apply the rod, than the fault of lying. I think, drum-major, you have in your possession a birch-rod ?"

"Certainly, sir," said the drum-major.

"Oh, sir ! please, sir !" said Drummer Smith.

"Now, drum-major, you'll just give him a dozen."

"Oh, sir ! please, sir ! Let me off this time, sir, and I'll never tell no more lies, please, sir," whined Drummer Smith piteously.

"Take him away," said the colonel.

"Boo-hoo-hoo. Oh, sir ! please, sir !"

At this juncture, Harding took a pace to the front, and, lifting his hand to the salute, said, "If you please, sir, may I ask something, sir ?"

"Well, what is it ?"

"Will you let Drummer Smith off, sir ?"

The colonel looked aghast for a few moments at the small drummer's temerity, and then, turning to me, remarked, *sotto voce*, "Upon my word, if I accede to this little fellow's generous request, I think it may be a better lesson, after all, to the other boy than a flogging. Call Drummer Smith back," he added aloud.

Drummer Smith speedily made his re-appearance on the wings of hope.

"That boy," said the colonel, pointing to Harding with his pen, and addressing Smith, "that boy whom you tried to injure, first by wounding his feelings with coarse and ill-natured taunts on

a particularly tender subject, then by telling a regular tissue of lies against him in this room, has come forward in your behalf with a generosity which will, I hope, have a beneficial effect upon you. He has asked me to let you off, and I now accede to his request. Never mind the rod, drum-major."

"Oh, thank you, sir," said Drummer Smith, in tones of the profoundest gratitude.

"Don't thank me. Thank that boy whose feelings you did your utmost to wound, and who returns good for evil in this way. Now be off, both of you."

The two boys required no second bidding, and so ended the first important episode in little Harding's military career.

I may here add, that the course adopted by the colonel with regard to Drummer Smith did him, I believe, infinitely more good than the flogging. From that day he began to mend his ways, which had previously been crooked in the extreme, and from being one of the worst boys in the regiment, he gradually developed into a very steady youngster.

CHAPTER VIII.

I REALLY thought that, in the episode described in the latter part of the last chapter, I had seen the first and last of little Harding as a prisoner before the commanding-officer. Judge, then, of my surprise, of my painful surprise, when, within a week, as I was again going in the morning to the orderly-room, I again saw him standing amongst the prisoners, one of them. A deep flush of shame passed over his face, and then left it ashy white. Hurriedly I entered the orderly-room, to ascertain from the guard report what he was charged with *this* time. There it was in black and white, though it looked to me much more of the former than

of the latter: "No. 1153. Drummer E. Harding. Drunk in barracks."

I could hardly believe my eyes. Drunk in barracks! I thought of the tender, loving mother ten thousand miles away, praying night and day for her child's welfare, and the concluding sentence of her letter to me, which I recollected by heart, rose before my mind:—

"He is but a little child, and oh, remember, when you were his age, how you were cherished and tenderly guarded from harm; how a mother's loving care stood between you and evil like a holy shield; and, oh, when you think of this, and contrast it with what my child's lot will be, help him, oh help my little one in his struggle to continue as he is now—good and pure as the angels in heaven."

"Good and pure as the angels in heaven!"

"Drunk in barracks!"

Rather a difference. I was more shocked than I can express.

The colonel soon appeared on the scene, and one by one, as usual, the prisoners were told off. There were very few this morning, and Harding was speedily summoned. As he stood confronting the colonel, he presented a pitiable spectacle. His face was utterly colourless, except his lips, which were blue and quivering; his eyes, generally so bright, so blue, so clear, and truthful, were now dull and bleared; and his legs, were perceptibly trembling under him. In fact he was trembling from head to foot.

Could *she* see him now, I thought, and know what had brought him to this, her heart would surely break.

"The boy's hardly fit to be brought before me," said the colonel; "he's suffering from the effects of drink now. However, as he's here, I'll proceed with the case."

As the colonel spoke, a tear trickled down the livid cheek, and there was a rising in the throat and increased quivering of the under lip, which made me fear that he was going to break down

completely. I could not bear to look at him, and for some moments studiously averted my gaze.

"Proceed with the evidence," said the colonel.

One by one, shortly, sharply, and decisively were the links in the chain of evidence strung together.

"Corporal Watts!"

"Yes, sir. I was in charge of the room last evening. A little before 'first post' I observed the prisoner. He was drunk. I ordered him to be confined."

"Lance-corporal Thompson!"

"Yes, sir. I was in charge of the escort ordered to take the prisoner to the guard-room. He was drunk."

"Sergeant Bennet!"

"Yes, sir. I was in command of the regimental guard. I received the prisoner over from the escort. He was drunk."

"What condition of drunkenness was he in?" asked the colonel.

"He was dead drunk, sir."

"Now, Drummer Harding, what have you to say in your defence?" asked the colonel. "Of course you do not deny having been drunk? In the first place, I should think and hope you would be above adding a lie to your palpable guilt; in the second, it would not do you the slightest good. The evidence against you is complete and conclusive."

"But I *do* deny it, please, sir," said Harding faintly, "I drank nothing to make me drunk; indeed I didn't. At least nothing I know of. Oh dear, I do feel so ill."

And here the poor little fellow looked on the point of fainting.

"Let him be taken to the hospital at once," said the colonel. "The case stands remanded until he's in a fit state to be brought up before me."

Forthwith Harding was taken away.

"I am more disappointed in that boy than I have been in any youngster who ever joined this regiment," said the colonel to the

officers round him. "In the first place, getting drunk ; in the second, screening himself, or rather trying to screen himself, with a lie."

"I don't believe he does lie, sir. He's incapable of it. I would stake my existence on his veracity. I feel certain there has been some foul play at work," I said, warmly.

"Well, well, we'll see. I'll investigate the matter thoroughly, you may be sure of that," said the colonel, and the subject dropped.

As soon as ever my morning's duties were over, I hurried off to the hospital, impatient to hear further particulars from Harding himself. On arriving there, I found that they had put him to bed, and I was forthwith conducted to the prisoners' ward, where he lay, by one of the hospital orderlies. Over the bed of every patient in a military hospital is a small card, on which is written the disease he is suffering from. I glanced at Harding's card, and found that it bore the inscription "*Ebriositas*," which, I dare say, I need hardly tell the reader means drunkenness.

"I'm so glad you've come, sir ; I thought you would. You believe me, don't you, sir?" said the little fellow, with a sort of feverish excitement.

"Yes, I do, Harding. Now, tell me everything you can recollect after you left the cricket-field last evening. I saw you there, you know, up to six o'clock."

"Yes, sir. Well after that I went——But, oh, sir, I must tell you first I've lost my locket that you got back from that Chinaman for me. I'd sooner have lost everything I have in the world than that."

"Lost your locket, Harding ! How?"

"I don't know, sir. When I woke up this morning, and found myself in the cells, I didn't know where I was, or what had happened ; and then I felt for my locket, and it was gone."

I felt like a detective who suddenly finds a clue.

"Never mind telling me about the locket, just now, Harding.

I daresay we'll get it back, as we did before. Now, tell me all you did last evening."

"Well, sir, after leaving the cricket-field, I went to the recreation-room, and was having a game of draughts with Drummer Harrison, when Drummer Cook came up, and said if I'd go to the canteen with him, he'd treat me to a pot of beer."

I smelt a rat, as the saying goes. Drummer Cook was one of the worst characters in the regiment.

"Well, and what did you say, Harding, to that?"

"I said I didn't want any, that I didn't like beer, and that I was going to have a cup of coffee in the recreation-room presently. I'm very fond of coffee, sir, and I always treat myself to a cup every evening. Well, Drummer Cook went away; but presently he came back again, and he said he wanted to ask me something in secret. I went to another part of the room with him, and he said he couldn't write very well, and asked me if I'd help him to write a letter to his mother."

"His mother! why the blackguard hasn't got one," I said. "When we were in Ireland, I recollect he obtained a week's furlough to go and bury her."

"Hasn't got a mother, sir! and he made me write such a nice affectionate letter! I said, of course, I would help him, and he got some paper and a pen, and took me to the quietest corner of the room, where, he said, we shouldn't be disturbed and wouldn't be seen, because, whenever he was trying to write to his mother, his feelings overcame him, and he wouldn't like the men to see him like that. Well, when I was writing the letter, he said that I must let him treat me to a cup of coffee in return for my kindness, and that he'd go and fetch it for me while I went on with the letter. He seemed as if he'd be hurt if I said no, and so I thanked him, and he went off. He was gone some little time, and then came back with a cup of coffee for me. I hadn't anything to drink since playing cricket, and, as I was very thirsty, I drank a lot of it right off; but it had a queer, bitter taste and I wouldn't finish

it. Then Drummer Cook and myself went on with the letter ; but after a bit everything began to go round before my eyes, and I could hardly keep them open. I told Cook I didn't think I could be well ; but he said that I was only sleepy after playing cricket, and that he'd go with me to the barrack-room. I could hardly walk out ; everything seemed reeling about ; and then after that I don't recollect anything more until I woke up this morning in the cells, feeling so ill I could hardly lift up my head. My first thought, though, was to see if the locket was all right, and I felt for it, but it was gone."

Of course, long before little Harding had arrived at the conclusion of his narrative, the whole thing was as clear as a pike-staff to me. The locket, which was a very massive and valuable one, had evidently excited the greed of the scoundrel Cook, who had dosed his victim with opium—a drug, of course, as easily obtained in China as tobacco is here—and then, when in a state of insensibility, robbed him. Poor little Harding, that locket, which he so fondly cherished in his bosom, had got him into three difficulties. At the same time that it had been a great solace and comfort to him, it had also proved itself to be as disturbing an element in his existence as that "blessed box of Spooner's" had been in its proprietor's.

"Why didn't you tell all this to the colonel this morning, Harding? Or, better still, why didn't you send for me in your difficulty, the first thing when you recovered consciousness? You know I'm always ready to help you out of any trouble."

"Oh, I know you are, sir," he said, tears of gratitude welling up into his eyes. "But I was so ill and so ashamed, I could hardly hold my head up. I could hardly even think."

"I shall just get the doctor to look at you again. His evidence will be rather important."

So saying, I went in search of our *medico*, whom I speedily found in the surgery.

"I say, doctor," I remarked with a bantering air, for the

certain prospect of being able to clear little Harding's character of the charge of drunkenness had put me into good spirits, "I say, *Æsculapius Redivivus*, you've made a mistake in the diagnosis of one of your cases."

"How's that? How's that, my dear fellow? Be very careful how you bring a charge of this nature against my professional knowledge," laughingly returned the doctor, who was "a good fellow" all round, socially, professionally, and religiously.

"Why, it's not 'hot coppers' after all that——"

"My dear sir, my dear sir," said the doctor, affecting to be scandalized, "don't make use of such a term in the very *santum sanctorum* of medicine, the surgery. *Ebriositas*, my dear sir, *ebriositas*. But seriously, what do you mean?"

"Why, Drummer Harding has not long been admitted into hospital by you."

"Yes, and sorry I was about it. I take the greatest interest in that boy, and I can't tell you how pained I was to see him brought here under such circumstances."

"You thought he was suffering from the effects of drink?"

"Unquestionably I did. The symptoms were exactly of that nature, and I read the charge brought against him."

"Well, poor little fellow, the case is simply this. He was dosed with opium, and then, when insensible, robbed of a valuable trinket, which was very precious to him."

"I am delighted to hear it—delighted beyond measure to hear it. At least you know, of course, what I mean. What's the loss of a trinket compared to the loss of character! Come along, I'll have another look at him."

On our way, I gave, in a few words, a sketch of the case, and by the time we arrived at Harding's bedside, the kind-hearted doctor knew as much as I did. In a few moments he pronounced that he, no doubt, had been mistaken, and that an overdose of opium was the cause of illness.

"It's lucky he didn't finish that cup of coffee; it would have

been enough to have poisoned him altogether. As it is, he is in a high fever now, which may turn into something very serious," said the doctor to me in a very low tone.

I need hardly add that the card with *ebriositas* on it was promptly removed, and another one bearing a less objectionable inscription, from a moral point of view, was substituted.

I then left for the purpose of at once making every effort to recover the locket, and bring Drummer Cook to justice. Within a couple of days I obtained overwhelming evidence against him, and an application for his trial by a garrison court-martial, on a charge of disgraceful conduct, was sent into the commandant's office. By that time, I am happy to add that little Harding was out of hospital again.

CHAPTER IX.

It so happened that a few days afterwards the colonel went to Canton to inspect a small detachment we had there, and I, at his desire, accompanied him. The prosecution against Drummer Cook I left in the hands of a brother subaltern, who was to act as adjutant during my absence, and the temporary command of the regiment devolved on the senior major.

After three days in Canton, in which business and pleasure had been combined, I started on my return to head-quarters, the colonel electing to remain a few days longer in the great Chinese city, where he was busily engaged in the purchase of all sorts of articles for his wife and children. Leaving the chief, to all appearances, wasting his substance in the most reckless manner on knick-knacks and gew-gaws, and shawls and preserved ginger, I embarked on board one of the large river boats plying between Canton and Hong Kong. These steamers are of immense size

and of rather fragile build. They are constructed after the pattern of the American river-boats, and are painted white. My homeward voyage was not prosperous. A gale of wind, almost a typhoon in strength, sprung up dead in our teeth, and against it our steamer, high out of the water, and with enormous paddle-boxes, was unable for many hours to make any headway at all. Consequently, instead of arriving at Hong Kong in the afternoon, as I ought to have done, it was two o'clock the following morning before we were alongside the quay. I was not sorry to find myself on *terra firma*, and made the best of my way to barracks. Here I found everything still and quiet, and at once proceeded to my quarters. On the table I found the order-book lying open. In "Garrison Orders" I read that the troops were to assemble on the garrison parade-ground at six o'clock that morning, for the purpose of hearing the proceedings of a court-martial read, and in "Regimental Orders" I saw that our regiment, with reference to the above Garrison Order, was to fall in at 5.30. On turning back a few pages of the book, I saw that, some days before, a garrison court-martial had been ordered to assemble for the trial of Drummer Cook. Putting this and that together, I came to the conclusion that the parade that morning was for Drummer Cook's especial behoof.

"The man will catch it hot, I expect, and he richly deserves it," I soliloquized, as I closed the book and prepared for bed. I ought, perhaps, to add explanatorily, that all drummers are not necessarily boys, though a very large majority of them always are. Cook, with all his faults, was a first-rate bugler, and had on this account been retained in the drums, though quite old enough to exchange his bugle for a rifle.

Heavy with sleep from exposure to the wind, for I had remained on deck nearly the whole trip, I sank into a deep sleep almost as soon as my head was on the pillow. A few hours later I was awakened by my Chinese boy pulling me by the shoulder. Tom, as I called him, was a capital boy, with

more fun in him and power of "talkee talkee" than most of the China boys, who generally go about their work in sedate silence.

"The dless for p'lade have makee go,"* said Tom as soon as I opened my eyes.

I had taken Tom over from the adjutant of the regiment we relieved at Hong Kong, and he was quite *au fait* at military habits and customs.

"Dress for parade gone, eh, Tom?"

"Yes, my thinkee more better you get up chop-chop."†

I took Tom's advice, hastily swallowed the cup of tea he had brought for me, and at once proceeded to get into uniform, reserving the pleasures of the bath for a later period after parade. While acting as valet, Tom engaged in conversation in the quaint way peculiar to those Chinamen who have come in contact with Englishmen.

"My plenty muchee glad you come back," said Tom.

"Thank you, Tom."

"What you thinkee Canton, eh?"

"Very fine place, Tom."

"Ahah, I thinkee so. No. 1 big piecee place, eh?"

"Yes, Tom, very big."

"You no hab got Englandside No 1 piecee place allo same Canton?"

"Yes we have, Tom."

Tom shook his head with such vehement incredulity that his pigtail oscillated like the pendulum of a clock, and then he proceeded with a species of cross-examination evidently aimed at my ultimate and utter confusion.

"What name belong No. 1 place Englandside?"

"London, Tom."

This "pidgin English," as it is called, barely needs translation. The Chinaman is unable to pronounce the letter r, and substitutes the letter l for it.

† Quick.

"London, eh? Ah. How many piecee man can catchee Londonside?"

"Three million, Tom."

"Thlee million, eh?"

I knew that Tom knew no more what three millions was than the child unborn, but a Chinaman never betrays his ignorance, or rather, I should say, never admits it; so Tom looked preternaturally wise for a few moments, and then gave a self-satisfied little grunt, as much as to say, "I have carefully digested that fact, viewed it from every point, and now thoroughly understand it in all its bearings."

"Thlee million, eh?" repeated Tom, rapidly tapping each long nail of his right hand with the forefinger of his left, and then each long nail of his left hand with the forefinger of his right, as if he were engaged in an abstruse calculation, with the object of being as exact as possible in his statements. "Ah, can catchee Cantonside twenty-thlee million."

I was about to pour out the phials of my wrath on Tom's shaven head, in virtuous indignation at his deliberate plunge into the deepest abysses of falsehood, when the officer's call sounded, and I hurried off to parade. I found the subaltern, who had been acting as adjutant during my absence, inspecting the band and non-commissioned officers, and I at once took over the duties from him. He handed me the proceedings of the court-martial on Drummer Cook, to hear which, as I had already surmised, the troops in garrison had been ordered to assemble. He also added that all necessary arrangements relating thereto had been made. The companies were speedily inspected by the officers, and then, with the band playing gaily at our head, we marched off to the garrison parade-ground, which was quite close. Here the first object that caught my eye were the iron "triangles" in readiness, and I, of course, then knew that we were to witness what, thank God, is now a thing of the past in the British army—a flogging. The other troops in the garrison soon marched on to the ground,

and we were all formed up on three sides of a square. Occupying what would have been the fourth side were the triangles, near which stood the assistant-surgeon. Everything being in readiness, the prisoner was brought up from the garrison cells under an escort with fixed bayonets, and made to face the troops. As he caught sight of the triangles, he knew what was coming, and his face grew pallid. The officer commanding now called the parade to attention, and then bade it "pay attention to the proceedings of a garrison court-martial."

The parade being a garrison parade, the proceedings should properly have been read by the garrison adjutant; but that officer being absent on some special service, the duty devolved upon me. I always, on such occasions, made it a point of performing the task with as little delay as possible, so as not to add needlessly to the suspense of the culprit, who stood waiting to hear his doom. I merely read out the charge against the prisoner, his plea, the finding, the sentence, and the confirmation by the general officer. After what I have already stated, it is hardly necessary to add that Drummer Cook, in addition to a long term of imprisonment with hard labour, was sentenced to undergo a corporal punishment of fifty lashes. As soon as I had concluded, the preparations, which I had so often witnessed, and always with a sickening aversion, were at once commenced. The prisoner, who was in his great-coat, took off that garment, and stripped to the waist; a stout leather stock was then buckled on round his neck, to save it from a chance cut with the lash, the regulations strictly specifying that the shoulders are to be the mark for the cat-o'-nine-tails; and then, arms and legs wide apart, he was strapped by the ankles and the wrists to the triangles.

It is the rule—or rather, I should say, it *was* the rule—for it is with unbounded satisfaction that I am obliged to speak of these regulations in the past tense—that in the infliction of corporal punishment in the army, the operators should be drummers, each of whom in turn laid on twenty-five lashes. To my intense

chagrin, I noticed, while the prisoner was being secured, that of the two drummers who were to wield the cat on this occasion, little Harding was one. Hastily I beckoned the drum-major towards me.

"Substitute another drummer for Harding at once," I said, sharply. "You know it is not the custom, drum-major, to detail the very young boys for this sort of duty, and I am astonished that you in particular should have singled out young Harding for this."

I knew what a favourite the lad was with the stalwart non-commissioned officer.

"Very sorry, sir; the last boy I would have detailed, sir, but there wasn't another drummer available. What with detachments at Canton, Kowloon, Foochow, and Stanley, and boys in hospital, we're so short-handed I can scarcely carry on the duties. The only other drummer besides these two I warned for this duty last night, but he was confined for insubordination this morning, and there was nothing for it but to warn Harding instead."

I was forced to admit that the drum-major was not in fault, and there was nothing to be done but to let things take their course. A glance at little Harding was quite enough to show me how painfully repugnant to him that course would be.

By this time everything was in readiness, and awaiting the commanding officer's sanction to commence. The drum-major was in position on one side of the prisoner, the doctor on the other, and the drummer who was to lead off with the first twenty-five stood, in his shirt sleeves and bare-headed, with the cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand.

"Go on, drum-major," said the commanding officer.

"One!" said that non-commissioned officer, in a voice sonorous and impressive.

There is a sharp whistle through the air, a quivering of flesh, and nine red streaks, running obliquely downwards from the left shoulder, appear on the white, naked back.

"Two!" says the drum-major, after a pause of about five seconds.

Another sharp whistle through the air, and the streaks turn from red into purple.

"Three!"

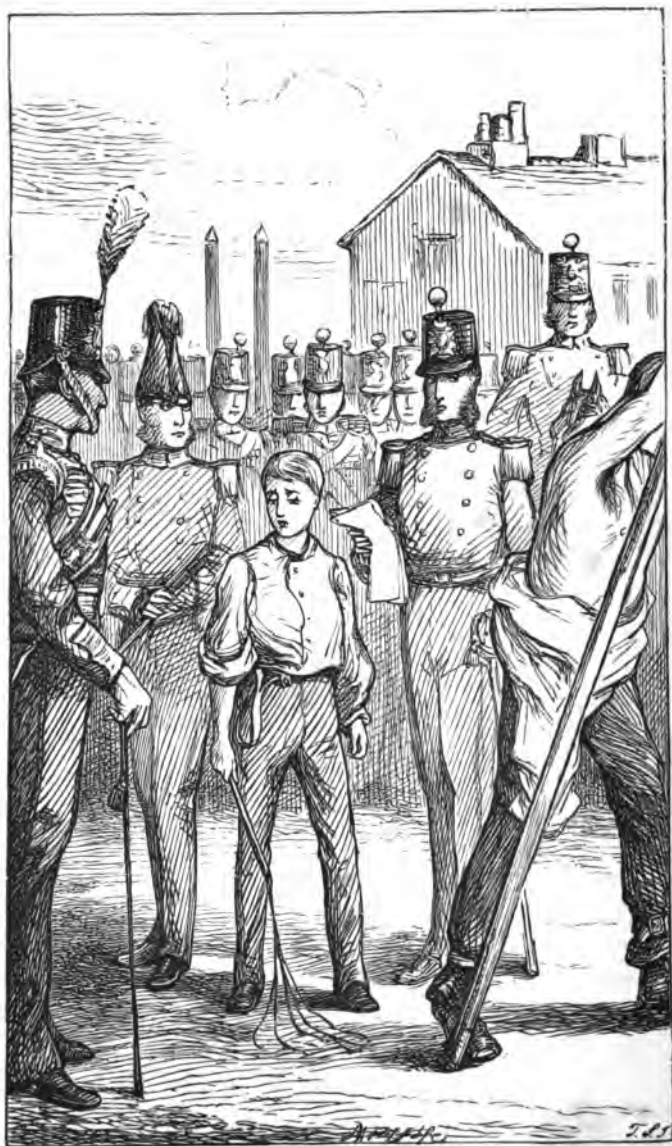
The cruel lash again whistles through the air, as here and there along the streaks the blood oozes through the broken flesh. This time a low groan escapes the wretched man.

"Four!"——

But why go on? Reader, you have heard enough, I am certain, of these sickening details. Let us hurry over the rest of this scene, in my opinion, almost as degrading to the witnesses as to the sufferer. With the regularity of a machine, the whistle of the lash follows the signal of the drum-major, until the twenty-fifth stroke is given. Then there is a pause, and the poor wretch, with a sigh of relief at even a few seconds' cessation of torture, asks for a cup of water. It is, of course, given to him, and, the poor creature's hands being strapped above his head, the attendant hospital-orderly holds a cup to the lips which the last few minutes of agony have parched. The doctor now feels the man's pulse, and announces that he is in a fit state to receive the remaining twenty-five. With painful curiosity I glance at little Harding. How will he acquit himself, I wonder? The drum-major has directed him into position, and he stands holding the scourge, with the knotted lashes trailing on the ground. On his young face, white with sickening disgust and horror, there is an expression almost of despair. This, however, alternates with another expression. There is mutiny in his heart. I avert my gaze.

"One!" says the drum-major, commencing afresh, as was the custom with the second twenty-five.

No sharp whistling through the air follows—no groan. There is a dead silence. I turn my head. Harding stands white and motionless as a marble statue, and the knotted lashes still trail idly on the ground.



“‘Drummer, do your duty!’”—p. 237

"Drummer, do your duty!" says the commanding officer, in measured, but imperative tones.

Harding neither replies nor moves; and he becomes, if possible, paler still.

"If you don't do your duty at once, I shall have to try you by court-martial," remarks the commanding officer, with severity.

The reader must not think this officer inhuman. On the contrary, I knew him to be soft-hearted and kind, but he was a thorough soldier, and to render obedience to those he owed it to, and to exact obedience from those who owed it to him, were, in his eyes, duties that were paramount.

"Once more, and for the last time, do your duty, drummer. I order you."

"I can't, sir. Oh, I can't!" exclaims poor little Harding. "Order me to do anything in the world but this."

A bright thought struck me, and seemed to throw a light on a way by which I might get Harding out of the difficulty. I notice that the stripes on the man's back are, as I have said before, from the left shoulder obliquely downwards, which at once tells me that the drummer, who has just been flogging, is left-handed, though I did not happen to notice the fact while he was at work. Harding I knew to be right-handed. Hurriedly I step up to the commanding officer.

"It's against all usage, sir, that a right-handed drummer should follow a left, or a left a right-handed. The drummer who inflicted the first twenty-five was, as you'll perceive, left-handed, and this one is right-handed."

I must here give the reader the reason why. Wielded by a right-handed drummer, the lashes would cut from the right shoulder to the left side, while, wielded by a left-handed drummer, they would cut obliquely from left to right. In this way the flesh would be cut into diamonds, the laceration would be fearful, and the severity of the punishment far in excess of what was meditated, the act permitting flogging having been passed, without

taking into consideration the possibility of such a contingency.

"Quite right," said the officer commanding the parade. "I am glad you brought it to my notice before things went farther. It would have been a most improper proceeding. But it's a great pity you and your drum-major did not think of this before, and have had another drummer told off for the duty."

"There's not another drummer available, sir, owing to detachments, sickness, and other causes."

"Well, it seems very irregular altogether. I suppose we must get a drummer from the other regiment on the ground, to go on with the punishment at once, although I do not know whether it is fair to the prisoner to allow this space of time to intervene. It is inflicting more punishment upon him than was meditated in the sentence."

For a moment the speaker looked puzzled, but just then the doctor came up, and helped him off the horns of his dilemma.

"There's rather a collapse on the part of the prisoner, sir; his pulse is very feeble, and under the circumstances, I, as a medical officer, recommend that the remaining twenty-five lashes be remitted."

In all such matters the word of the doctor is law. Woe to the combatant officer, no matter what his rank, who in such a case was to fly in the face of medical authority. But there was no such wish here.

"I am delighted to hear your recommendation, and to act upon it. I cordially detest corporal punishment in the army, and shall bless the day which sees its abolition. Take him down."

The wretched prisoner was at once unstrapped, and, after having a restorative administered to him, and his great-coat thrown over his lacerated shoulders, was taken off to the hospital to have his wounds dressed; and to a lively tune from the band we marched back to quarters.

Harding narrowly escaped trial by court-martial for disobedience of orders, but his extreme youth, his general exemplary conduct, and the peculiar circumstances of his case (which I took good care should be represented) being taken into consideration, he was let off with a severe reprimand.

Poor little fellow! He was certainly having rather a rough time of it.

CHAPTER X.

THE reader will doubtless recollect how the drum-major said in the last chapter that many of the drummers were sick in hospital. This, alas! was too true. But disease was not confined to the boys. The sickly season had set in in deadly earnest. Pestilence was rife amongst the troops in garrison, and cholera, low fever, and dysentery were filling the hospital—aye, and the churchyard, too, to overflowing. It was not long before disease laid its gaunt hand on Harding's little frame, and held him helpless in its baneful grasp. The incident recorded in the last chapter seemed to have made a strong and painful impression upon him. It was the climax of a series of mishaps. Never under a soldier's jacket did there beat a young heart so true as his, so full of lofty aspirations, and of resolutions to do his duty; and yet within a few months he had been twice before the commanding-officer as a prisoner, and now he had but narrowly escaped trial by court-martial on one of the most serious charges which can be brought against a soldier—disobedience of orders. These things preyed on his mind—naturally a sensitive one, until they predisposed his body to disease. In addition to this, there was no doubt about it, the little fellow was terribly homesick. This is a disease—for disease it often becomes—which frequently attacks

young soldiers. I have known cases where it has ended fatally I have known, and military doctors have told me, of young fellows who have sunk and died from sheer pining after home, and nothing else. The French are much more subject to this disease *nostalgie* (from the Latin *nostalgia*) as they call it—than we are; and the Swiss more so even than the French. In this frame of mind, out of which I in vain strove to rouse him, it was impossible that Harding should escape the low fever so prevalent and deadly in Hong Kong. For a long time he pluckily stuck to his duty; but he became so feeble and wan that I at last insisted on his going into hospital. Here he became gradually worse, and a medical board decided that he should be invalided home.

Between the date of this decision and the time for the departure of the homeward mail, there were still several days to elapse, and during that period he became so much worse, that it was found impossible to move him. On the very day he was to have been carried on board, he was in a high state of delirium. To have moved him would have been certain death; to let him remain until the next mail, a fortnight after, in the fever-stricken place, was hardly less certain; but still, of the two courses, it was the one which the doctor said offered the better chance, and it was accordingly adopted.

I was a frequent—for some days, indeed, a constant—attendant at his bedside, and my heart was often wrung as I listened to his delirious wanderings. Sometimes he fancied he was once more strolling through the country lanes with his mother, as I had so often seen him in old Ireland, and at these moments he would tell her things about me which indicated how deeply the small acts of kindness I had shown him from time to time had sunk into and been treasured up in his affectionate heart. The delirium passed away, and I used to try and brighten a few hours every day by reading and talking to him. In a few days he was slightly better, but so fragile and weak that he hardly looked like a being of this world.

"If he gets a relapse, nothing can save him," said the doctor to me; "and the chances are, he has a repetition of the attack in three days. The best way to guard against a relapse, however, is to give him a change of some sort, no matter how slight. But the question is, where to send him?"

"Well, why not let me take him over to Stanley?" I asked. "I'll undertake to get him over there by coolies, in a hospital stretcher and paliasse just as easily as if he were in his bed."

"Very well, my dear fellow," was the reply. "I think it is the best thing to be done; and, as I know the interest you take in him, I'll leave the matter in your hands. The change of air will do more for him than doctors or physic."

"Will he be able to go to-morrow morning?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. Take him in the cool of the morning. There's no chance of his catching cold in the climate such as it is now."

Guided by this advice I at once set to work about my preparations, and the next morning, about half-an-hour after sunrise, I presented myself at the hospital with four coolies carrying a hospital stretcher slung on two long bamboo poles. Harding was in an unconscious state, half *coma*, half sleep, and without his knowing anything at all about it, we placed him, mattress, bedding, bed-clothes and all, on the stretcher, above which I had rigged up a sort of canopy of bamboo work and green cotton to shade him from the morning sun. After providing myself with restoratives in case of need, we started on our journey. As the coolies—two of which at a time were quite sufficient—stepped along briskly under their light burden, the length of the bamboo poles imparted an easy motion to the stretcher which lulled rather than disturbed, and little Harding continued to lie in the same unconscious state. In this way we passed quickly through the streets and out into the country. Our road lay through "The Happy Valley," as it is called, the prettiest, in fact the only really pretty spot in the island of Hong Kong. It is here where the English cemetery is situated, and as I passed the gloomy enclosure where lay the

bones of countless British soldiers, and where so many of our men, even in their short sojourn in this land, had found a last resting place on earth, I glanced at the white, wan, little face beside me, and so death-like did it look that I could not help thinking that our way, instead of being over the hills to Stanley, should be through that gateway over which was inscribed "HODIE, MIHI, CRAS, TIBI."

After leaving the Happy Valley we commenced a rather rugged ascent up a winding footpath, I walking alongside the stretcher with an occasional glance at the almost inanimate burden. Motionless and unobservant he continued to lie until we arrived at the summit of the first hill where the breeze fanned our cheeks with a freshness we had not been accustomed to in the town, and then I saw his eyes open with an expression of wonder and bewilderment in them.

"Harding," I said, as I laid my palm gently on the little hand which was lying outside the bed-clothes, and which looked as if it would never more clasp a bugle or run nimbly over the keys of a fife, "I am here with you. I am taking you to a place where you will soon get strong and well enough to go home."

He turned a look of deep gratitude upon me and tried to speak. But the lips merely moved inarticulately, and his eyes filled with great tear-drops which rolled down his thin cheeks and on to the pillow. In his weak state the fresh air was too much for him, and had I not at once administered some medicine the doctor had given me with a view to such a contingency, he would have fainted.

The whole distance to Stanley was not, as far as I can remember, more than six or seven miles along a rough hilly pathway right across the island, and, before the sun was high in the heavens we arrived at our destination. Stanley was a small station on the coast where there was a military hospital, and a detachment of ours under the command of a subaltern. I at once, of course, took Harding to the hospital, and after handing him over to the

assistant-surgeon in medical charge of the station, and seeing that everything was provided for his comfort, I proceeded to the quarters of my brother officer, the commandant, who of course received me with a hearty welcome. "It's a way we have in the army."

"And to what do I owe the honour of this unexpected but welcome visit, old fellow?" he asked with a merry laugh. "Want to see what state my detachment is in, and thought you'd take us just in our normal condition without any preparation, eh?"

"Not a bit of it," I replied. "I come on no regimental business. I have brought over Drummer Harding for a change, just as a last chance of saving him. He's at death's door."

"What, that little fellow we all like so much, and about whom there's a sort of romance—father an officer in the army; mother, pretty ladylike looking person who fainted dead away on the pier-head as we steamed out of harbour on leaving Ireland?"

"Yes. The doctor thinks the change here may just fan the few sparks of vitality left in him into new life, or at all events into sufficient life to admit of his going home in the next mail steamer."

"Poor little chap, I *am* sorry, and I hope Stanley will bring him round. I say, old fellow, as soon as we have had our breakfast I should like to go over with you to the hospital and see if there's anything we can do for him. I go there regularly every day and have a talk with those men who are well enough to talk or be spoken to."

Of course, I assented to this proposal, and we sat down to breakfast, to which I, after my morning's work across the hills, did ample justice.

I just mention the above dialogue to show how much little Harding had become in the regiment, and also to show what a kindly feeling the British officers generally entertain towards their lowlier brethren in the ranks. I must add that this feeling is much strengthened, or rather, I should say, there is more opening for it in foreign service, than in quarters at home.

After breakfast, we visited Harding and found him comfortable and well cared for in his new quarters. Already the change seemed to have done him some good, and his face brightened up as we entered the room where he lay. I read to him a great deal during the day, and spoke to him cheerily of his speedy return to his mother, a subject which never failed to bring a flush of hope and pleasure mantling over his white sunken cheeks.

I dined and slept at Stanley that night, much to the delight of my brother subaltern commanding the detachment, who, poor fellow, led rather a lonely life, and was only too glad of these breaks in its monotony. The following morning I was obliged to return at a very early hour to headquarters; but previous to starting, I paid little Harding a farewell visit, and found that he had passed a tolerably good night, but was very weak. Before leaving Stanley, I elicited a promise from the doctor that should any very dangerous symptoms set in, he would at once despatch a special messenger to acquaint me with the same.

At any other time I could and would have remained a few days at Stanley, on leave; but, sad to relate, such havoc was disease creating among us at headquarters, that nearly all the officers were on the sick-list, and those who were able to get about had, in addition to their own duty, to perform the duties of their sick brethren. Under these circumstances, I could hardly think of asking for more than twenty-four hours' leave.

CHAPTER XI.

Two evenings after my return from Stanley, I was sitting at mess. It happened to be "guest night," and a few of our civilian friends were dining with us. It did not do to "give in," and those of us who were off the sick list, carried on, to the best

of our abilities, the social as well as the military duties of the regiment. The band, sadly thinned in numbers, was playing a merry sparkling selection from a popular opera bouffe, the after-dinner wine circulated freely, the waving punkahs cooled the air deliciously, and a continuous buzz of conversation betokened a general sense of enjoyment. Altogether, I had for the moment forgotten the sickness and suffering which we were in the midst of, and was giving myself up to the genial spirit of goodfellowship which pervaded the party, when my China boy "Tom," glided noiselessly in his paper-soled shoes to my side, and slipped a note into my hand with the information, "One piecee Chinaman have makee bling chop-chop Stanleyside."

"Will you allow me to open this letter?" I asked, addressing the officer who sat as president, though I must admit that in my anxiety to hear the news from Stanley, I was nearly altogether forgetting this point of etiquette.

"Certainly," was the reply; and I at once tore open the envelope.

The letter was from the doctor at Stanley, and contained the following startling intelligence:—

"Drummer Harding has had a relapse, and is sinking fast. I doubt if he will live the night through. He has frequently asked for you. I send this by special messenger as you requested."

My mind was made up with the perusal of the first sentence. Begging the president and the guest next whom I had been sitting to excuse me, I rose from the table.

"No bad news, I hope?" said the president.

"Not unusual news; another of our poor fellows going, and I wish to see him," I replied, as I left the room, and beckoned Tom to follow me.

"Tom," I said, as soon as we were outside, "can catchee me one chair and four piecee coolie, chop-chop?"

"Can do," replied Tom. "Where you wanchee go?"

"Stanley, now, chop-chop."

"Stanleyside!" said Tom, opening his little slits of eyes as wide as he could, which was not saying much. "No can do. Too muchee pylong.* Coolie plenty muchee flaid. No can catchee."

"Well, never mind, go and try at once at all events," I said impatiently.

Tom did as he was bid, and by the time I had changed my mess dress for more suitable apparel, he returned shaking his head and repeating, "No can do. Too muchee pylong."

The fact was, the road to Stanley was infested by thieves, and the chair coolies were afraid to traverse it by night time. From the first I would have made myself independent of any conveyance at all, and have trusted to my own legs, and my recollection of the road, but I was very much knocked up with the arduous duties which the sickness of others entailed upon me; and beside this, I was not wholly free from the low fever which at this season seemed to spare no one. There was no help for it, however, and I determined to start at once and find my own way across the island. As regarded any encounter with the dreaded "pylongs," I soon satisfactorily disposed of that anxiety by providing myself with my revolver and a good thick stick. Thus prepared, I set off, regardless of Tom's entreaties to wait until after daybreak, when the chair coolies would no doubt be willing to convey me. A walk of about three quarters of an hour brought me to the Happy Valley, and as I passed the sad spot where many of my comrades were lying, I uncovered my head and murmured, "*Requiescant in pace.*"

Fortunately a bright moon was shining, and after leaving the gloom of the Happy Valley beneath me, my path over the hills was lighted from heaven, and I had but little difficulty in finding my way. Not a living creature did I meet, and at about one o'clock in the morning I reached Stanley. I of course directed

* Robber.

my steps towards the hospital, where I found the doctor in the surgery.

Poor fellow ! worn out in his struggle with death—for there were bad cases in hospital that night,—he was dozing in an arm-chair, but my entrance aroused him, and in a moment he was wide awake and energetic.

"I'm glad you've come," he said. "That poor little drummer of yours has been fretting to see you, and I think he'll pass away more peacefully now that his longing will be gratified."

"There is then so little hope as that ?" I said.

"No hope at all, I should think," was the reply. "He will probably breathe his last at about daybreak: and if he passes that, he may linger on till to-morrow afternoon. But twenty-four hours is the utmost limit, I should say."

Weary with my night's journey, and sick at heart with sadness, I followed the doctor to the death-bed of my little friend, for such he was, notwithstanding the difference in our ages and position. By the side of the bed sat a hospital orderly, who rose on our entrance.

"No change, I suppose, Johnson ?" said the doctor.

"No, sir," replied the orderly, "much about the same. He's been asking a good deal for the adjutant, but he's been lying quiet for some time now."

At this moment little Harding opened his eyes, and he saw me. A faint smile played over his face as he vainly tried to raise himself from his pillow. In a moment I was bending over him, with his small cold hand in mine.

"Harding, little friend, I have come to be with you."

Yes, I called him little friend. He was no longer "No. 1153, Drummer Harding." In the dark shadow of Death those earthly distinctions were lost. The doctor and the orderly left us alone.

"Harding," I said, bending very low, and speaking very softly in his ear, "you have been asking a great deal for me, they say. You have something to tell me, haven't you ? some message ?"

To this last question the colourless lips faintly articulated—
“Yes.”

Then, after a short pause, he gave me, in feeble tones, loving and tender messages to his mother. Faithfully I promised to carry out all his wishes on this point, and after this he became more composed.

“They’ll bury me like a soldier, won’t they, sir?” he suddenly asked after a time.

“Yes, Harding.”

“Yes. I *should* like to be buried like a soldier,” he repeated.

In a short time he went off into a deep sleep, and I repaired to the quarters of my friend commanding the detachment, after leaving instructions with the hospital-orderly attending Harding, that I was to be summoned directly his patient awoke.

I found my brother sub. up and waiting for me. He had heard of my arrival, and had prepared not only a “shake-down,” but also a substantial supper for me. I felt more inclination for the former than the latter, and, tired out both in body and mind, I lay down in my clothes, ready for any emergency. I received no summons, however, and was allowed to sleep on until “nature’s sweet restorer” had run its due course.

The following morning, at an early hour, the “ration party” from head-quarters, which came over three times a week to Stanley, arrived, and with it the drum-major, who had walked over to see his small comrade. The kind-hearted giant, by way of a little delicate attention, had brought Harding’s fife with him.

“I thought you might like to have it with you ; it would be a sort of comfort to you,” said the drum-major, who looked at everything from a professional point of view.

Little Harding was very gratified, and said he could no longer play it himself, but that he would very much like to hear a tune on it once more.

“Will you play the regimental Quick March? I should like to hear it again,” he said.

"That I will," said the drum-major.

"Wait a little, please. Will you help me to sit up? I can hear better then."

We lifted him up, as he asked, into a sitting position, supported by his pillows, and the performance at once commenced.

I shall never forget that scene. I can see it before me now. The great stalwart drum-major, erect and towering above the bed, playing away in his best style, while the dying little drummer-boy listened with a smile on his pinched, drawn face.

Toward the afternoon, little Harding became fainter, and it seemed as if the end were very near. I was sitting by the bedside when I heard a deep-drawn sigh, and from the very depths of his heart there came the whispered words :

"Oh, if I could only see her once more !"

"Vain wish," thought I, as I walked to the open window. "She's twelve thousand miles away."

For some minutes I stood gazing at the landscape.

Merciful heaven ! Was I dreaming ? Did I really see approaching the hospital two of my brother officers escorting a chair, in which was seated a lady, in the deep mourning of a widow ; and that lady little Harding's mother !

It was no dream. In a few moments a cry of joy rang through the sick-room, and Harding was in his mother's arms.

* * * * *

Joy never kills, they say. In this case the adage was certainly borne out. From that moment of supreme joy, when little Harding beheld his mother before him, he began to mend ; and before three weeks elapsed, his discharge was purchased, and he started homewards with her.

Some explanation of the seemingly miraculous appearance of Harding's mother on the scene, is due to the reader. The rich manufacturer was dead, and Mrs. Dermott was once more a young widow. He had been seized with an apoplectic fit, which had carried him to the grave after a few days' illness. In those fer-

days her devoted care, in return for all his brutal unkindness, had awakened within him a spirit of penitence and remorse. On his death-bed he made a new will, by which he left the bulk of his property to the child he had hated in his lifetime. After his death, she had, with a mother's yearning stronger than ever in her heart, determined to set out at once to her child, and bring him home. She arrived at Hong Kong to hear that he was on his death-bed. Every attention was shown to her by the officers of the regiment, and two of them escorted her to Stanley.

* * * * *

There is still something more to tell the reader. As I write this conclusion, Harding—no longer “little” Harding, but a strapping young lieutenant, in a crack regiment—bursts into the room, with a bright smile on his face.

“Why, Ted!” I say, “what’s brought you home so unexpectedly?”

“My dear father,” he says, wringing my hand heartily, “I have just got two days’ leave from Aldershot, and I’ve run over to have a look at you.”

What does Harding mean, you will think, by “my dear father.”

Why, reader, I *am* his father, at least his mother is my wife; and this evening the three of us will have a talk over the events I have described in this story, as we sit together by our fire-side, the most united happy little family circle in England.

TAMING A TIGER.

CHAPTER I.

THE shades of night had gathered thickly round the far-famed Rock of Gibraltar, wrapping it in deep gloom. Heavy banks of clouds, presaging a storm, obscured moon and stars, and from head to foot, from signal station to base, the Rock had enveloped itself in its sable mantle.

To one man in Gibraltar the darkness came with especial welcome; for "he loved darkness more than the light, because his ways were evil." To him *atra nox* was a friend in need.

"Well, it's lucky it's a night like this," remarked the man in question, as, after raising himself from a crouching position, he sat on a rock close to the water's edge, with his hand on his left side, against which his heart was thumping loudly. "S'elp me, Bob, that was a narrow squeak! Enough to set a chap's heart beating like a steam-engine. That relief passed within two yards of me; and if it hadn't been for its being so dark, and my keeping so still, I'd been nobbled to a certainty. What a place this here Gibraltar is, to be sure! You can't go half a dozen yards without runnin' up agin a sentry, or a relief, or a picket runnin' up agin you."

The reader, from the above, will come to the conclusion that the speaker was not a very respectable member of society. He

was, in fact, a convict, who had that very evening managed to elude the vigilance of the warders, and make his escape from the Convict Prison, situated close to the New Mole. The exploit which had sent him a convict to Gibraltar, had been "wounding with intent to murder," in a poaching fray, of which more anon. He was dressed in a hideous garb of coarse parti-coloured flannel. One leg of his trousers was a dirty yellow, the other a muddy brown; one sleeve of his jacket was blue, the other black; and over the entire suit were stamped numerous broad arrows. It was thus that the most dangerous and desperate of the convicts—the murderers and would-be-murderers—were attired, and an additional proof of the estimation in which this man's character was held by the prison authorities lay in the manacles and gyves riveted on his limbs. That, thus heavily ironed, he should have effected his escape, was still another proof of his desperate, daring spirit. He was essentially one of what politicians term "the dangerous classes"—a man perpetually at war with society, a man in whose heart an erroneous idea that it was society which was against *him*, raised a perennial spring of bitterness. This delusion is general amongst these so-named dangerous classes. They prey upon society, they murder, they steal, and then when society in self-defence adopts preventive measures, they deem themselves oppressed and wronged, and the victims of the great. From childhood this wretched man had been sunk in moral turpitude. The only period of his life when he may be said to have earned an honest penny, was while serving for a short time in the army. Discipline had obliged him to perform certain duties, and there were some days when he, at all events, earned his day's pay. But altogether his military career had been full of disgrace. In it he had certainly received several wounds and scars; but they were not honourable ones. Far from it. On his breast you would have seen the letters "D.," and "B. C.,"* on his back, the

* It is no longer the custom in our army to mark with these letters. "D." of course stood for "Deserter," and was an effective preventive against frau-

marks left by fifty lashes of a cat-o'-nine-tails. In what he would have regarded as his palmy days—that is, when booty was plentiful and detection evaded—he had been a burly man of the heavy brutal type, but imprisonment and the internal rendings of the devil which possessed him, together with bread-and-water diet, as a punishment for constant acts of insubordination, had wrought a vast change in him during the last two years, and he was now cadaverous and lantern-jawed. He was, however, still a powerful man, and capable of the fiercest effort, either for attack or resistance; moreover, the maddest desperation now turned him into little better than a wild beast.

“What’s life to a chap in a place like that?” he muttered, as he waved his hand in the direction of the prison, while a scowl of most malignant hatred settled on his countenance. “I’ll never go back there, though. *That’s* certain; sure. They’ll never take *me* alive. If they gets anything at all of me, it will be only this here carcase as they’ve worn down to half what it was. If they was to surround me with a whole regiment of soldiers they wouldn’t get nothing more. They’d have to kill me or I’d kill a few of them. If I couldn’t get it done no other way, I’d rush on their bayonets sooner than go back there, and hug ’em to my heart, as if they was my best friends. And so they would be. ‘True as steel,’ is a sayin’ as old as the hills, and I’d prove it was a true sayin’ here, that I would.”

The wretched creature spoke with an earnestness which brought flashes into his sunken eyes, and a rush of blood to his cheeks. There was no doubt that he meant what he said, every word of it.

“Yes, but I didn’t get away from there,” he said, after a few

duleul enlistments. “B. C.” denoted “Bad Character,” Men were thus marked only by sentence of a court martial. The mark “B. C.” was inflicted only on incorrigible scoundrels, repeatedly convicted of theft and other disgraceful crimes; and military criminals ordered to be so marked were also invariably sentenced to be dismissed with ignominy from the service. And a good riddance were these bad soldiers.

moments, and in calmer tones ; " I didn't get away just to come and sit here and wait for 'em to come and take me again. I ain't such a bloomin' fool as to give 'em the slip without having some plan in my head. There's a good bit to be done afore the day-break, when they'll be after me like a pack o' hounds, and the sooner I begin the better. They'll find me a fox what'll give 'em a pretty good run."

It was now between nine and ten o'clock, and he could hear the drums and fifes playing *tattoo* on the various regimental parade-grounds. In all probability no further search would be made for him until the morrow ; but daylight would certainly bring recapture along with it, if he could not devise some means of changing his hated dress and ridding himself of his fetters. Staying there inactive would not do it. He made up his mind for a bold move, and at once proceeded to carry it into execution.

" I knows the sort of place where they keeps 'em ; I ain't been a soldier without learnin' *that* much ; they'll be the first things to get hold of," he remarked, as he rose from his seat.

Above him, at a short distance, he descried through the dark a sort of port-hole in the rock, from which hung a rope ladder. The latter was merely a rough and ready means of ingress and egress used by the officers quartered in the adjacent barracks, when they wished to bathe.

" It's no use staying here doing nothing, I'll try this," he thought.

He ascended the rope ladder with some little difficulty, owing to the fetters on his legs, and on getting through the port-hole he found himself in a subterranean passage, formed partly by nature, partly by the military engineer's art. At the farther end, at no very great distance, he could discern the entrance, or rather, as it would be in his case, the exit, and for this he at once made. Groping his way along in the dark, he soon emerged from the passage, and suddenly found himself on a large flat tract of land,

covered with rows of wooden huts and blocks of stone buildings. These formed the barracks at Europa Point, principally occupied by artillery. The buildings near him seemed to be unoccupied, for they were as dark and as silent as the tomb. Creeping up to a long row of wooden huts, he stopped and listened. Not a sound came from within. He crept on, and paused at one of the doors. On it was painted in white letters, "ABLUTION ROOMS."

"No, thank'e; that's not what I want just at present," he said, moving on to the next row.

"What have we got here, eh? Oh, 'COOK-HOUSES,' eh? Well, a cook-house ain't a bad thing, but it ain't what I want just now."

So saying, he passed on and continued his search, walking further down the row of huts, and narrowly scrutinizing the inscription on each door. He was now obliged to exercise a still greater amount of caution in his progress, and crept stealthily along the shadow of the walls, for every step brought him nearer to a sentry who was posted some little distance beyond the end of the row, and whose movements he could easily discern by the light of an oil lamp which burned near.

"Ah, at last. 'Ooray!" muttered the convict, with suppressed joy, as he read over a door, "ARMOURER'S SHOP." "That's the shop I want. That's the ticket—the ticket-of-leave, I may call it," he added, with grim irony.

The sense of freedom, although it was as yet only freedom in manacles, was positively intoxicating to the prison-bird accustomed for so long a time to be "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd," and there was a savage jocularly about the hardened reprobate which it is not difficult to understand. He gently turned the handle and pushed, but the door was locked.

"Bother! what do they mean by going and locking up doors in this way? Blessed if I don't think a locksmith one of the greatest enemies of mankind goin'," he remarked, in much the same frame of mind as the burglar was in when he barked his shins against the coal-scuttle in the passage, and wanted to know,

with an air of injured innocence, what on earth the untidy housemaids meant by leaving coal-scuttles about.

"Never mind, when you can't get in at the door, you must go in through the winder. That's one of the fundamental rules of the purfession."

This "fundamental rule," however, was not so very easily carried out. The window was securely hasped on the inside.

"Bother! Ain't it positively sickening! this here timidity of people? Ain't it positively shockin'! this want of trust in their fellow-creeturs?" remarked this severe moralist, as he in vain tried to push up the sash.

The only method by which to accomplish an entrance was to smash a pane of glass and undo the bolt. But this could not be done without a noise, which in the stillness of the night would certainly attract the attention of the sentry.

"Well, this *is* hard-lines," soliloquized the convict; "to be within reach of what one's been longin' for, dreamin' of, and not to be able to put out one's hand and catch hold of it! Oh dear, oh dear, what a thing it is to be unprovided with the simplest purfessional tools! Bother! if they have a sentry so near, what do they go lockin' up everything in this way for? And if they locks up everything in this way, what do they go having a sentry for? It's downright foolishness, *I* calls it."

For some minutes the convict stood cogitating, and carefully weighing the doctrine of chances. Sometimes he pressed his hand against the pane of glass, half-determined to run the risk, but a glance at the sentry, standing quietly on the alert, always deterred him.

"Drat him! I dare say he'd be only too glad of a little bit of excitement, and's hard on the look out for somethink to occupy his mind. What a cryin' shame it is to keep a poor man standin' doin' nothing for a couple of hours together, with nothing to amuse him, nothing to improve his mind. It's what I calls heartless. They don't half take care of our poor soldiers. There's

that poor chap there might get the ear-ache, standin' still for so long in the cold night air. There ought to be a reg'lation for stuffin' their ears with cotton when they goes on sentry."

These noble sentiments of disinterested philanthropy were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of five or six men and boys who assembled in an open space not very far from the sentry, and every now and then there was a sound as of a trumpeter trying his instrument with a few preliminary and *piano* notes.

"Ah, I know what they're a-going to do. Many's the time I've laid in my cell and heard them braying and tootling all over the place."

The performance the convict thus alluded to, was the sounding of "last post," a call which falls with unwelcome significance on the absent soldier's ear. A bright thought seemed suddenly to inspire him.

"The very thing," he said, "the very thing. Blow away, I'll be ready for you. 'You be blowed,' as the bugler said to his bugle when he was a-goin' to begin."

"Fall in," said a voice as of one in authority.

"Aye, 'Fall in,' we sha'n't fall out about that," remarked the convict, pleasantly.

The trumpeters in obedience to the command formed up in a line, and stood with their trumpets up to their mouths, awaiting the signal to commence.

"I'm ready for you; begin as soon as you like," said the convict, as he stood watching these preparations, with his hand pressing against the pane of glass nearest the bolt.

"Go on," said the voice.

In a moment the air was filled with a prolonged blast, *fortissime fortissimo*, and, simultaneously, crash went the pane of glass.

"Don't think old Two-hours-on-and-four-hours-off* heard much

* A private soldier on guard is, during his twenty-four hours' tour of duty, two hours on sentry and four hours off, and it was no doubt a knowledge of

of that," chuckled the convict. "That's what you calls taking advantage of circumstances."

The speaker was right enough. The sentry's senses, visual and aural, were fully taken up with the trumpeters' doings, and the crash of broken glass had passed unnoticed. By the time the last note of the trumpets had died away, the hasp of the window had been undone and the sash thrown up. With his fore-arms on the sill, the convict was just hoisting himself up, when the sentry at the top of his voice shouted, "Guard, turn out!" and the convict dropped down on to his feet again and was just on the point of making for the dark subterranean passage, when a glance towards the sentry reassured him. It was merely the usual nightly custom of turning out the guard and inspecting it at "last post," which had frightened the convict out of his wits, and this he soon perceived.

"Blessed if I ain't as nervous as a cat in a strange garret," he soliloquized. "Yah, you great yelling savidge—bringin' a chap's heart up to his mouth like this here! You'd ought to be ashamed of yourself. These here soldiers don't mind how they upsets people's nerves, pertickerlerly these artillery chaps as makes more noise than any of 'em."

Having relieved his mind, the convict reapplied himself to the feat of hoisting himself through the window. But his fetters were not favourable to gymnastic exercises, and though he prolonged the attempt until the sweat started to his brow, he was obliged to drop on to his feet again, on the wrong side.

"Blow it! goin' through winders ought to be just in my line in this here harlequin sort of a rig," he gasped with savage irony, as he looked down at his parti-coloured jacket and trousers. A second attempt, however, after a little breathing time, was successful, and this so elated the convict that on finding himself

this rule, gained during his short service with the army, which supplied our convict with this *impromptu* compound sobriquet.

inside the hut, he struck a terpsichorean attitude and remarked, "Blessed if I couldn't dance a cellar flap!" The performance of "a cellar flap," however, was indefinitely postponed, and the man at once commenced eagerly groping about in the dark.

"What's this here, eh? only a sword bayonet. What's—oh, Jimini, if I ain't been and knocked over a stand of arms. This here armourer-sergeant ought to be reduced to the ranks for carelessness, he ought."

Had the noise been heard? No, the sentry could be seen through the window, still standing under the lamp, "like Patience on a monument."

"Brayvo, old chap! You just keep them ears of yours a bit longer in your breeches' pocket, and you'll suit my complaint first rate," remarked the convict approvingly, as he continued his search in the dark. "What's these? Hammers. No, we don't want no hammers. Puts one in mind o' breaking stones, and we don't want no disagreeable recollections. Let all that there be buried in the 'blivion which it merits, as the newspapers say. What's this? Hallo! Oh, crimini! If I ain't been and run right up agin the point of the anvil. Crikey, don't it hurt, just? A anvil's a very good thing in its way; but it ain't a very good thing in mine. What's this? Pish! only pincers. What's the good of pincers if you ain't a earwig. Ah, here they are! At last! The beauties! There ain't no fear, the pets, of takin' 'em in the dark for a lady's hand. Blessed if the very feel of 'em don't give me a taste o' the sweets o' liberty, as the poet says."

The last few sentences were spoken as the convict passed his hand rapturously over the rough rasping surfaces of some files, which of course were indispensable implements in an armourer's workshop, and had been the objects of his search. Selecting a couple of the coarsest he put them into the bosom of his shirt as carefully and tenderly as if they had been precious as the purest gold. And so they were to him. Not for their weight in golden sovereigns would he have bartered those two pieces of iron.

He hurriedly made his exit with his treasures. It was easier to get out of the window than to get in, the flooring within being a foot or so higher than the ground without, and he was soon creeping along, as before, under the shadow of the huts, towards the dark subterranean passage. He speedily regained this refuge, and when he was about half way through, he took out one of his files and tried it on his irons. The experiment was not satisfactory. The operation produced a grating jarring noise, just that sort of sound which would penetrate to a considerable distance in the stilly night, and be certain to attract attention. So he put the instrument back again into his bosom and retraced his original steps along the passage, through the port-hole, and down the rope ladder, until he found himself once more on the brine-washed rocks. Here he tried the burr of his files at work, as Demosthenes did the pitch of his voice, by the sad sea waves ; and concluding that the sound would be lost in the distance, or drowned in the splash of the ocean, he set to work with a feverish energy. He plied at his task with a will and perseverance which never flagged. The feverish longing for liberty lent him a strength and endurance far beyond his own natural powers. His breath came fast and thick ; the sweat streamed down his face and off his hands ; the veins and muscles of his arms swelled almost to bursting. Still on he went rasping and grinding. Once only he paused just to mutter, "What wouldn't I give just for a drop o' drink !" and then at it he went again. Nevertheless it was fully an hour and a half before his bonds were riven asunder, and he stood up in unfettered freedom. This was a grand step, but after all it was only a preliminary one. There was a great deal more to be done, and not much time to lose about it.

"There, I dispense with your services, having no further need of 'em, as the Queen says when a orficer don't behave himself, and she wishes to give him the sack," was his remark, accompanied by a hoarse laugh, as he threw his hated chains and gyves far out to sea.

He was about, on the same principle, to hurl the files after the fetters, when a sudden thought stayed his hand.

"No," he muttered, "they've stood good friends to me, and I'll treat 'em more respectful."

So saying, he proceeded to bury his files deep in the sand, giving them, in his gratitude for their services, almost a Christian burial. He now again ascended the rope ladder—this time with considerably more alacrity than in the previous ascent—and in a few minutes once more stood at the mouth of the subterranean passage, watching the sentry as before. Everything was just as quiet, as he crept along noiselessly, until he came to a more substantial range of buildings than those he had at first explored in search of the precious files. There were lights in one or two of the windows, and very dim oil lamps burned in the stone passages, down which he could see, as all the doors were open. Going up to one of these, he read, with evident satisfaction, "OFFICERS' QUARTERS."

"Ah! that's just what I was a lookin' for," he chuckled. "'None but the brave deserve the fair,' as the cabby said when he offered to fight the old gentleman for the extra shilling."

The convict at once proceeded to reconnoitre the premises with great caution; but the quarters were quite silent, and to all appearances deserted. Unaccountably so it would have seemed, had not the sound of loud talking and laughter, coming across the square from the large, well-lighted-up mess-room opposite, explained where the inmates were.

"Yes, I thought so. They're still at their grub. Blessed if those chaps don't live like fighting cocks. Well, as they *are* fighting cocks, I suppose it's all right they should live as sich."

There was a room on the ground floor into which he could see indistinctly through the window by the dim light of a turned-down lamp. A brief but careful inspection assured him there was no one in it, and as it suited his purpose as well as any other, and was easy of access, he determined to honour it with a visit. After

taking a final look all round, and seeing that the coast was clear, he made a dart into the passage, and, turning the handle of the door, entered the room.

"Now, that's what I calls doin' things nice and proper, instead of lockin', and barrin', and boltin' up, as some folks do. Careless, some people would call it. *I* calls it considerate."

His first act on entering was rapidly and noiselessly to pull down the blinds; his next to turn up the lamp and have a look round. It was rather nervous work, liable as he was to be caught at any moment like a mouse in a trap; but the cool self-possession and impudence of the reprobate did not desert him.

"Well, this here's what I calls pretty comfable," he said, glancing round with an approving eye. "It's a improvement on a cell. What you may call a change for the better, as the gentleman said, in a low tone of voice, when he handed the young lady t'other side of the counter a bad 'arf-sovereign, and got four good 'arf-crowns for it."

The room was furnished after the usual manner of officers' quarters, and notably opposite to him stood a set of military drawer-cases, which, in the interior economy of military life, "a double debt contrived to pay," and formed a case for the portable chest of drawers when on the move, and, when in quarters, a species of wardrobe. This article of furniture was at once subjected to a searching examination.

"I hope this cove ain't a twenty stunner, nor yet a living skeleton, but a happy go-between atwixt the Roosian giant and Tom Thumb," remarked the impudent rascal as he drew out a varied and large collection of clothes, neatly folded up. After turning over several suits, with a passing remark on each, such as, "don't suit my complexton," "ain't genteel enough," "too much grey, a delicate shade cert'nly, but reminds one too much of Dartmoor," he at last fixed upon one which pleased his fastidious and refined taste.

"Yes," he remarked approvingly, holding it up at arm's length,

"I rayther think this is the fit that'll about do me, as the old gentleman said when he was took with the appleplexey, and tumbled down two flights o' stairs. Now, the next article I wants is some shirts and such like, and I suppose he keeps 'em in these here chest of drawers. Yes, sure enough, here they are, any amount of 'em. What can a chap want with all these? Why, it's only a kindness to ease him of a few. We'll just pick out the ones as has buttons on all right. Now, I wonder what sort of boots he's got," observed the convict, turning his attention to a fresh article of dress, after having satisfactorily disposed of the under-linen question. "Enough of 'em, at all events. Why, there's a reg'lar regiment of 'em standing up against the wall."

For a long time he in vain tried to fit himself, and finally succeeded in getting a stout pair of shooting boots on his feet.

"Well, I suppose these must do," he remarked. "I should have liked a pair or two of them patent leathers, but I suppose it can't be helped."

Collar, neck-tie, and hat were then in turn selected; and having thus provided himself with a "rig out" from head to foot, the convict was about to don his borrowed, or rather his stolen, plumes, when his eye was attracted by a piece of paper placed in a prominent position on the mantelpiece. On the piece of paper was some writing, evidently intended to catch the eye of some expected visitor.

"Ah! what's this? We'll have a look. It may throw a light on the subject, as the p'leeceman said when he turned his bull's-eye lantern down the kitchen airey, where there was a chap makin' free with the coals."

The writing on the piece of paper was as follows :—

"DEAR CHARLIE,—I'm dining with the Rifles down in the town this evening, and won't be back until late—probably one or two o'clock. I've got my leave all right for the next three days, and will be ready to start at seven to-morrow morning. I have

told my servant to have the prog packed up, and all ready this evening. I write this, as you said you'd drop in on your way to mess, to hear what arrangements I had made. Just scribble a few words under this to say you've seen it all right, and leave it where you found it.

"Yours, R. H. W."

Underneath this was written in a different handwriting :—

"DEAR DICK,—All right. I'll be here at seven to-morrow morning sharp.

"Yours, C. K."

The convict was a better hand at print than manuscript, and he was a considerable time over the perusal ; but he patiently struggled through every word, until he had made himself complete master of the sense.

"Now, this here's what I calls gratifying to a chap's feelings," he remarked with deliciously cool assurance. "Charlie's evidently been here and gone again, and Dick won't be back until one or two o'clock. Now, there ain't no call for me to hurry myself. I can take it easy, and make myself comfortable for a bit. What's this here, though, he says about the prog? 'I have told my servant to have the prog packed up all ready this evening.' That sounds tempting, precious tempting. Now, I wonder if it's somewheres in this room. It ought to be ; and if that there servant ain't obeyed his master's instructions, I hope he'll get the sack. Blow me, how I *should* like a taste of something good after that bread and water, which was about the only thing I seemed to get in that hotel as I've just left, through not approving of the rules of the establishment."

It must be here explained that the prison fare had been wholesome enough, and had included an abundant sufficiency of meat ; but the man had been constantly, almost continuously, on bread

and water diet, owing to his insubordinate, hardened spirit, and the length and insolence of that unruly member, his tongue.

"Now, I *do* wonder if that there prog is anywhere about. I'll just have a look around."

At once suiting his actions to his words, he commenced a vigorous search in corners and cupboards, and under tables and chairs, but without success.

"I *do* believe that there servant has been and neglected his master's orders—the outrageous scoundrel! If there's a thing I hate, it is for a servant not to do what he's told. I wish I had the larruping of him. It's onpardonable this here neglect of dooty."

There was as yet a small inner room, apparently devoted to ablutionary purposes, to which the search was extended, and here a flat wicker basket of goodly size and promising aspect was discovered.

"That's it, for a hunder'd," exclaimed the convict, and, with a cry of joy, he pounced on the prize. In a moment the lid was torn open, and a tempting display of food and drink met his enraptured gaze.

"S' 'elp me, Bob! if this here ain't the very sort o' thing I like," said the convict, as he seized the basket and carried it into the adjoining room. Now I'll make myself at home, and have a jolly good blow out," he continued, as he seated himself in an arm-chair near the fire, with the basket on his knees. "There ain't no hurry, and I can change this here uniform after I've had a bit of a supper."

The operation of unpacking the basket was at once proceeded with.

"What's this? A bottle of sherry white wine. That ain't much good. That's only fit for the ladies. That ain't drink for a man. Ah, here's a bottle of brandy. That's *my* tippie, as the babby said when they shoved the indy-rubber pipe of his feeding bottle into his mouth. This is prime! And a tumbler! And a

corkscrew handy! Now I *do* call this considerate, I do. I ain't tasted a drop o' liquor for two year or more. I'll just wet my whistle afore I tackles the grub."

The cork was soon drawn, a tumbler 'speedily filled, and the process of "wetting his whistle" was just on the point of execution when the convict paused.

"Where's my manners? I was completely forgettin' myself, as the pickpocket said when his hand was caught in the lady's reticule, and he wanted to make believe it was only through his absence of mind it got there. I was quite forgettin' the rules of perlite society. Here's to the health of my gallant host, Dick. He must excuse my formiliarity, through being onacquainted with his t'other name. Here's your jolly good health, Dick, old chap, and I hope you're enjoying yourself with your friends the Rifles. Don't, by no means, think o' hurryin' back on my account. I can take care of myself. Here's luck, my boy."

A gulp which diminished the contents of the tumbler by about one half, here followed the polite little speech.

"Ah, that does a chap good, it does. Now I mustn't forget my friend Charlie. Charlie, I looks towards you, my boy, and I hope you and your pal Dick will have a pleasant little pic-nic, or whatever your little game is, and I hope I won't put you to no inconvenience through saving you the trouble of eating your lunch. I daresay there's lots more where this comes from, and if there ain't, you'll have a opportunity of practising that there beautiful virtue what the chaplain in the institootion I've voluntarily retired from, calls self-denial. Charlie, my boy, here's your jolly good health, and many of 'em."

Here the remaining contents of the tumbler were drained to the dregs, after which the drinker reversed his goblet to indicate that the toast had been drunk with the honour of "no heel taps."

"Now, having done what's perlite and proper, I'll pay a little attention to myself."

With voracious appetite the convict now attacked the viands,

and cold chicken, ham, *pâté de foie gras*, and various other comestibles disappeared with astounding rapidity. The celerity of the performance seemed to strike even the consumer.

"Well I knows I *am* more of a bolter than a chawer," he remarked half apologetically to himself. "But, bless you, who wouldn't be a bolter if he had been having nothing scarcely but bread and water for months. I am forgettin' my manners again," he observed, with his mouth full of an amalgam of *foie gras*, bread, butter, ham, and hard-boiled eggs. "I beg to propose a vote of thanks to my gallant host, Dick's servant. He's done his duty oncommon well in preparing these here delicacies for my refreshment, and I don't think I've done my share of the work badly in eatin' of 'em. I beg to retract the onhandsome and oncalled for remarks about him as I was betrayed into using in a moment of pard'nable irritation, through thinking he hadn't followed out his master's orders as he had ought to have done. Here's good luck to you, my boy, and always do what your master tells you. I'm oncommon gratified with the attentive way in which you've prepared this here genteel little spread, and when you wants a character come to me, my boy, and I'll give you one."

Here about half a tumbler more of brandy, diluted with a very small quantity of water, was tossed off, and the reprobate fell to eating again with unabated vigour.

In about a quarter of an hour he had fully satisfied the ravenous cravings of his appetite, and pushing away the *débbris* of the feast he once more applied himself to the brandy.

The accursed drink soon mounted into his brain. With many bad natures, drink, instead of warming the heart into merriment, fills it, on the contrary, with black and bitter brooding. So it was with this wretched man. The deeper he drank, the deeper and darker became his sense of imagined injury. His uncouth jocularities, his coarse similes, and rough attempts at wit deserted him. A lowering frown settled on his brow. He brooded, sometimes sullenly, sometimes fiercely, always bitterly over his fancied

wrongs. He thought of the imprisonment he had undergone, with its irksome restraint and iron discipline, which had at times nearly driven him mad ; he thought of the impotent fury he had sometimes given way to in his cell ; and as he thought of all this, he also thought of what and who had brought it all upon him. Not his own acts, not he himself, of course. Men of his moral stamp never trace their misfortunes to the right source.

"Called me a poacher, eh?" he muttered as he ground his teeth and clenched his fists. "Let 'em. I don't care. That's *their* name for it. It ain't mine. Ain't the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, as the chaplain reads about, ain't they made for the poor, I should like to know, as well as for the rich? Ain't they made *more* for the poor than for the rich? for the rich can buy 'em and the poor can't. Then why shouldn't they take 'em? Show me the pheasant or the hare what's born with a gentleman's coat of arms stamped upon him, and I'll let him alone. I'll respect him as private property. But I ain't never seen any of these here beautifully marked animals, and I don't suppose I ever will. When I do I'll treat him with proper respect."

Then followed, fed by frequent draughts of the fiery spirit, a long and bitter train of recollections. The night's work, which had ended in the sentence of penal servitude he had just been undergoing passed vividly before his mind's eye. He and his companions while snaring pheasants on a gentleman's estate, had been surprised by the gamekeepers, and an attempted capture by the latter had resulted in a fierce encounter. He, the most desperate and reckless of the gang, had drawn his knife on one of the keepers, and left him for dead. His escape would have been effected, but a son of the owner of the property, a young officer at home on leave, happened to be returning from some entertainment in his dog-cart, and hearing the noise of the fray, he handed the reins to his groom, and rushed to the assistance of his father's keepers. He arrived on the scene of the scuffle just

in time to see the wretched criminal we have been writing about stab the keeper, and make off. Calling to another of the keepers to attend to the wounded man, the young officer started in pursuit of the would-be-murderer, and speedily overtook him. A fierce struggle ensued, in which the poacher again drew his knife, still warm and reeking with the blood of its last victim. But, strong, hulking brute though he was, he had found more than his match in the young soldier, who had not many months left the Royal Academy at Woolwich, where he had excelled in every manly sport and exercise. A blow from the young athlete's fist had sent the ruffian sprawling on the ground, and, before he had had time to rise, the knife was wrenched from his murderous grasp, though not before it had inflicted an ugly gash on the captor's arm—fortunately, however, only a flesh wound. The man was tried and found guilty of assaults with intent to murder, and many previous convictions being proved against him, he was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, and transported to Gibraltar, which then, and up to a few years ago, was a convict station.

As the man brooded over this, he worked himself up into a frenzy of revengeful hatred towards his young captor.

"If ever I meets that young spark," he hissed out, "I don't care where it is, I sha'n't be able to keep my hands off him. They're itching now," he muttered, opening and clenching his hands spasmodically over and over again; "they're itching now to be at his throat. I'd give the rest of my life almost just to have him on the ground with my hands on his throat. Did I enjoy that there food? Yes I did, as I haven't enjoyed anything of the sort before in my life; but, s'elp me, Bob! I didn't enjoy it half, no not a hundredth part as much as I would squeezing his life out, until I see his eyes starting out of his head, and his face getting black, and the blood squirting from his mouth. Yes, that would be sweeter than liberty. There's a old sayin's how revenge is sweet, and that old sayin' 's a true one. Many's the time, as

I've been in my cell, feelin' almost as if I could dash my head agin the walls to try and break through, I've thought o' that there young spark what got me there. It was a bit of a lark to him that night to catch me; and, my eyes, wouldn't it be a bit of a lark to me now just to catch *him*. I think I see him now, as I see him that night, with his swaller-tailed coat, and his white neck'andkerchief, and his dancin' pumps, all so fine and dainty. I'd sooner a' been collared by a chap in a suit o' corduroys. That wouldn't a' drove me half so mad, thinkin' of it. But thinkin' of it won't do no good now. It al'ays sends me clean off my chump, and so I won't think no more of him. I'll just shove them togs on, and then, after placing myself under the obligation of a small loan from my gallant host, Dick Whatever-his-name-is (I'll be bound he's got some money lyin' about somewheres), I'll be off out of this here. That liquor's put new life into me, and I feels quite light-hearted at the thought o' bein' dressed like a 'spectable member of society. This here uniform as I've got on don't become my style o' beauty," he remarked, as he surveyed himself in a toilet-glass. "I wonder if Dick's got any stuff to make a chap's hair grow. The fashion o' wearing the hair in that establishment ain't pretty. Ah, here's just the ticket. Here's some pomatum. It's downright impossible to look or feel like a gentleman without pomatum."

Having thus defined the *sine quâ non* of gentility, he proceeded to anoint his closely-cropped, bullet-shaped head so plentifully, that the scented grease trickled over his forehead, and down his neck and cheeks. Even then he was not satisfied.

"Lay it on thick, my boy," he soliloquized. "The more you has on, the more you'll look and smell like a gentleman. Bless me if it ain't actooally a tricklin' down my back! Crikey, that 's refreshin', and *does* make a chap feel genteel!"

This remark was accompanied by a pleased smirk, which wrinkled up his face until it was like (to make use of Falstaff's simile) "a wet cloak ill laid up."

"Hallo! what's these white letters on this here box?" he suddenly remarked.

Gradually, as he mastered the writing letter by letter, the pleased smirk gave way to an expression horrible in its intensity. His lower jaw fell, his hands clenched themselves, his eyes glared with a tigerish gleam, and his breath came short and thick. The inscription which produced this strange effect was, to all appearances, simple enough, and ran thus :—

"Lieutenant R. H. Warburton,
Royal Artillery."

For several moments the convict remained rooted to the spot where he stood, his glittering eyes still fixed on the letters. Then, in husky tones, he at last spoke—

"Why, it's *him*!"

The words seemed to break the spell, and he hurriedly left the spot for another part of the room.

"Wear *his* clothes!" he muttered in a hoarse whisper. "Not I. The feel of 'em on me would wither me up."

With this he seized the garments he had been about to don, and, tearing them to shreds, scattered the remnants about the room with the frenzy of a maniac.

"I'll wait for him. Yes, I'll wait for him in the suit o' clothes he put on me. How my hands is itching! I don't care for liberty now. I want a taste o' something sweeter."

The ferocious glare in his eyes left no doubt of his meaning. There was a tigerish thirst for blood in them, and a horrible working about the cruel mouth which boded the most dire evil to the object of his hatred.

Had it not been for that accursed drink (he had imbibed nearly the whole bottle of brandy), it is hardly likely that the wretched creature would have been so blinded by his longing for

revenge, as to gratify it at the expense of that liberty he had with such desperate daring striven to gain.

"There is death in the pot," was once said. "There is murder in the bottle," is what can be said times without number

7.

CHAPTER II.

WITH the gaiety of the troubadour hastening home from the war, though *minus* the guitar accompaniment, young Dick Warburton, of the Gunners, hummed a popular melody as he walked homewards to Europa, where his battery was quartered. The popular melody divided his attention with a big cigar, and between the two he seemed in a very pleasant frame of mind.

"Who comes there?" shouted the sentry on the gateway of the Europa Barracks.

"Officer," was the reply.

"Pass, officer; all's well," said the sentry.

I can fancy I hear the reader say, "Why, I thought 'friend' was the customary response to a sentry's challenge." So it is, dear reader, in every British garrison I know of *except* Gibraltar, and there the custom is as I have stated it to be.

As Warburton passed the guard-house a little further on, the sergeant of the guard who had just marched off the "relief," was standing at the doorway, with his hand raised to the salute. He was a fine old soldier, an especial favourite with the officers, and Warburton stopped to speak to him.

"Why are your sentries loaded, Sergeant Thompson? As I came along, I heard you ordering the relief to load with ball cartridge," said Warburton.

"Standing order of the garrison, sir."

"Standing order of the garrison ! What do you mean ? The sentries on the north front are always loaded, I know, but nowhere else."

"*All* sentries, sir, on the Rock are to be loaded when the signal goes from the signal station that a convict has escaped, and the signal went not very long before tattoo."

"Oh, of course, yes. I forgot all about the escaped convict. Well, you haven't heard or seen anything of him, I suppose ?"

"Well, I haven't seen him, sir, but in a way I have heard something of him."

"How's that ?"

"Why, one of the warders at the convict establishment, sir, was in barracks this evening, and as he was going out we had a bit of a talk together, and he told me about the convict that's got away. He's an out-an'-out desperate character, sir. He goes amongst the warders by the name of 'the Tiger,' and the warder I was speaking to says he doesn't think they'll ever take him alive, sir. He says they'll most likely have to shoot him down just like a mad dog, or he'd do for anyone trying to take him, to a moral certainty. He is a sort of wild beast as would spring on a man, and tear his heart out, if he couldn't find any other means of killing him. Since he's been in prison, he's all but killed two warders, and would have killed 'em outright but for assistance coming up to them just in time. He's been almost all his time on bread and water diet, and the warder says his back's scored with floggings until it's like a gridiron ; but they can't do anything with him."

"A pleasant sort of a fellow to meet on a dark night," said Warburton.

"Ah, that he is, sir. A new chief warder they had out from England a short time ago said *he'd* tame him."

"Well, did he try ?"

"Oh yes, sir, very hard."

"And what was the result?"

"Why, the result is the chief warder has got one finger-joint less than he used to have. Bit off, sir."

"What a brute! The man can be hardly human."

"No, sir, he seems to be just what they call him—a tiger. The chaplain said *he'd* tame him, and went into his cell."

"Well, and what did he do?"

"Well, sir, he came out much quicker than he went in, and what's more, he's never tried the experiment again. It was what they call a flying visit, sir. Then the governor of the prison tried. He's a gen'lleman who prides himself on his knowledge of human nature, and the method of managing men. But he couldn't do anything more than the rest. You can't go on doing nothing but flogging and starving a creature, no matter how great a brute he may be, can you, sir?"

"No, a nature like that would puzzle the sternest martinet, or the ablest and most patient philanthropist. Good night, Sergeant Thompson. If any of your sentries fall in with this fugitive, you'll have a chance of trying your hand at regeneration."

"I'd sooner take half-a-dozen more tours of guard duty, sir, than attempt that task," replied the sergeant with a smile. "Good night, sir."

Warburton's cigar was not yet smoked out, and, as the atmosphere was pleasanter outside than in, he strolled towards the ramparts, and leaning against the carriage of a gun mounted *en barbette*, meditatively puffed his cigar. As he gazed out to sea through the misty wreaths of fragrant smoke, fancies gathered thickly, and performed a sort of march past before his mind's eye. Of the reminiscences and speculations which floated past his mental vision, the following is a transcript:—

"The chief warder said *he'd* tame him. The governor tried to tame him. The chaplain said *he* would. Yet no one did. This irreclaimable savage has defied all their attempts. I don't believe any animal, least of all a human being, is absolutely irreclaimable.

Every animal is, in the long run, amenable to kindness. Even the costermonger poetically inculcates this doctrine—

‘If I’d a donkey vot wouldn’t go,
D’ye think I’d vollop him?—oh, no, no.’

On second thoughts, I’m afraid that ‘Oh no, no,’ is couched in a vein of irony. Seriously though, this wretched man is a human problem I should like to solve. Upon my word, I should like to tame this tiger. I recollect when a boy of about sixteen we had a pony at home, a savage little brute that no one could do anything with—‘the Demon,’ as we used to call him. My father, my brother, the coachman, the stud groom, and a neighbouring vet, all, in turn, tried their hands on him, but the Demon only became more and more demoniacal with each attempt.

“‘Let me try,’ I said to my father.

“‘Nonsense, my boy,’ said the dear old governor, ‘when your elders and superiors in experience have failed, are you likely to succeed? I’ll have him shot. He’s dangerous, and will be killing somebody at last.’

“‘But let me, at all events, try the experiment first,’ I pleaded.

“‘Nonsense, he’ll be killing you,’ was the reply.

“However, in the end, the dear old boy, God bless him, let me have my way. My first act was to take the pony off to an isolated out-house, where I had rigged up a comfortable loose box for him. Not a soul besides myself did I allow into this place, the key of which I always kept in my possession. At first it was very disheartening work, and my visits to his stall were frequently very like that one which the chaplain paid to this convict in his cell. I used to come out considerably quicker than I went in. The more hopeless, however, the task appeared, the more firmly I set my mind on achieving it. At last, after about a month, on a certain day—proud day—I summoned my father, my brother, the coachman, the groom, and the vet.—all the unsuccessful

experimentalists—to witness an interesting performance to be held at the Demon's residence. The spectacle was nothing more nor less than the saddling and bridling of the Demon by myself. Formerly the *modus operandi* had been as follows: First, he was lassoed round the neck, and his head lashed securely to a post. Having thus effectually debarred him from adopting his usual salutation of going at you open-mouthed, the next step had been to drop into the stall in front of him, and there in that position he had been bitted and saddled. On this occasion, however, there was nothing of the sort. To the surprise and anxiety of the spectators, and with the admonition 'Be careful, my dear boy, for goodness' sake,' from my father's lips, I walked into the Demon's stall, patted him, spoke to him, put the bit in his mouth, and the saddle on his back without any assistance or precautions whatever. And what was still more astounding to the spectators, and gratifying to myself, was that the Demon acknowledged my caresses with a pleasant whinny. Never shall I forget the real, unalloyed pleasure I felt in that conquest over what was regarded as unconquerable vice. And what were the means I had employed? Why, kindness. Everyone else had tried flogging and spurring, and I saw that had done more harm than good. I used to spend hours and hours in that stable, sitting by the Demon and talking to him. I don't mean to say that a horse understands the human voice, but he has a most sensitive and thorough knowledge of its tones. You can do a great deal with a horse by talking to him. I used to take my books or drawing materials to that stable, and while I read or drew, I would at intervals address the Demon with a pleasant remark, accompanied by a pat, or a lump of sugar, or a carrot. At first these attentions were met with savage ungraciousness, and the Demon seemed as if he would prefer my fingers to carrots; but gradually, very gradually, there was a slight improvement in his manners. Encouraged by this, I ventured on a little additional familiarity, and received in return such a nip on the fleshy part of my arm from the Demon's teeth,

as to make me dance again. Smarting with pain, and with wrath, I was instinctively about to retaliate with a blow, when a flash of reason through my brain stayed my hand. The next moment I was congratulating myself on my self-command. Had I struck that blow it would, in all probability, have been the death-blow to all my efforts at reclaiming the Demon. At all events, all my past labour and patience would have been worse than thrown away, and I should have had to recommence from a starting-point still more remote from the goal than the original one. My patience under that severe trial of temper was rewarded. The Demon, I believe, was utterly amazed at not having had a kick or a blow in return, and from that moment I think he began to take a less prejudiced view of human nature. Gradually he came to know my voice thoroughly, and to associate it with a kind pat or some little equine delicacy, and not, as of yore, with a cut over the head, or a sharp thrust of the spur into his flanks, or a rough 'coom oop, there!' accompanied by a vigorous and perfectly unnecessary dig in the ribs with a curry-comb. It was a great encouragement to me to mark this improvement. I won't say there were not occasionally very serious and very trying back-slidings on the part of the Demon, but I grinned and bore them. A person might think that these returns to vicious ways would become all the more trying as time went on; that they would make any attempt appear more and more hopeless, and that my temper would become more and more likely to break down under the disappointment and irritation. But on the contrary; the more trouble I had expended, the less likely was I to lose the whole fruits of it by giving way to a moment's irritation. And that's the way, after a month's work, in which I tamed the Demon and made a friend of him. Now is there not some analogy between him and this wretched convict they call the Tiger? Haven't they flogged and flogged him as the Demon used to be flogged, and hasn't he under this treatment grown worse and worse, just as the Demon did? By Jove, the memories of that boyish victory

make me sigh for another and greater conquest of the same description. I should like, even with no higher object than the satisfaction of solving a problem every one has declared to admit of no solution, to try what kindness, patient, unwearying kindness would do for this Tiger! The chaplain, no doubt, meant to try it; but he didn't stick to it. There were plenty others claiming his time and attention on whom he, doubtless, thought his time and attention would be more successfully bestowed. If my pleasure was great in reclaiming this pony, how infinitely greater it would be if I could reclaim a man like this convict. Yes, a human tiger is far nobler game for the philanthropist to fly at than an equine demon. 'Pon my word, that last reflection savours rather too much of self-satisfied assurance—dubbing myself a philanthropist, indeed! I had better be off to bed instead of wasting the precious hours which should be devoted to sleep, particularly when I have to be up so early this morning for that trip. By the way, I hope my servant has got the grub all packed up and ready for a start. There I am—humanity all over. Tumbled with a plump from the topmost battlement of my castle in the air down to the very practical and low level of eating and drinking. There, my cigar's finished, and my speculation will end as it has done, in smoke. They were both pleasant enough though, while they lasted. Farewell, day-dream! Ta, ta, cigar!"

So saying, Dick Warburton, with a shrug of the broad shoulders, and a laugh playing over his clever, good-looking face, brought his reverie to an abrupt conclusion, threw the end of his cigar over the ramparts, and made for his quarters.

* * * * *

Now, if in the scene I am about to describe, I were to tell you that Dick Warburton preserved a calm exterior, that he was not startled, and that his heart did not give a jump, as the saying goes, would be to say of him what a young lady novelist would say of her pet hero, a sort of fellow, you know, who (*she*

says) would languidly smoke a scented cigarette, and keep up a lazy but pungent fire of badinage with a circle of acquaintances, the while his leg, which had been fractured in a steeple-chase, was being taken off at the knee-joint—an impossible creature, who never existed, and never will exist, except in the fervid imagination of a young novelist. Warburton was not an impossible creature. He was flesh and blood. The Iron Duke himself would sit on his horse, rigid as a statue, calm and collected, while shot and shell hurtled and screamed in the air, and while the fate of nations was depending on the issue. But had he, on retiring one night to his bed-room, found himself suddenly confronted by a man cadaverous in hue and feature, in the hideous dress of a convicted felon, with fury and thirst for blood in his eye, I have not the slightest doubt that a startled expression would have flitted over that iron-bound countenance, such as no amount of peril on the battle-field had ever brought there. The coolest, bravest man, suddenly brought face to face with an unexpected danger—a danger in a place where he least expected it—betrays a momentary faltering of spirit, and the difference between him and a coward under the same circumstances is, that in the former the faltering spirit at once recovers itself, and is braced up to meet the emergency, while in the latter the spirit continues to falter. I have known a man face what appeared to him and all his companions certain death with a calm, dignified mien; and, yet, on a little yapping cur suddenly barking at his heels, I have seen him give a jump which has set the bystanders in a roar. A brave man might say with Macbeth (slightly altered)—

“What man dare, I dare :
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger ;
*But come when I'm prepared,** and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble.”

* Shakespeare's line, it is, perhaps, hardly necessary to tell the reader, runs thus, “Take any shape but that,” etc., in allusion, of course, to the ghost of the murdered Banquo which rises at the feast.

A pluckier young fellow than Dick Warburton never wore the British uniform. It took a great deal to make *his* firm nerves tremble. No doubt the reader has already thought thus much of our hero from what he has read of him in these pages, and yet, as Dick Warburton entered his room with the gay burden of some mess-room song on his lips, he started as if an adder had stung him, while his heart leaped wildly within him, and the words of the song suddenly changed into an ejaculation.

Even with the most thoughtless, even with the most unbelieving, sudden peril invariably brings that cry to the lips. Instinctively—for it comes even before the senses have fully realized the danger—does that invocation fly upward. It is the signal of distress which we make for help from above.

The reader must have a pretty fair inkling of the sight and circumstance which wrought this sudden change in Dick Warburton's demeanour. Crouching, ready for a spring on his victim, like the ruthless animal he was called after, was the convict—his livid, cadaverous face working with furious excitement, and in his hands he held a revolver, which of course belonged to Warburton, and had been found in his quarters.

"One cry for help, one step back'ards, one step for'ards, and this here bullet's in your heart," said the infuriated animal in a hoarse growl. "But I don't want to kill yer just yet. I wants to play with yer a bit like a cat does a mouse. I've made you a bit white about the gills, haven't I? But there'll be something drawn presently as will be a bit redder."

The brutal savage was quite mistaken in his man, if he thought Dick Warburton was going to show the white feather, even in the dire peril he stood—a man unarmed at the mercy of a man, armed and without mercy; confronted by a creature mad with thirst for blood, and with the means of taking it ready in his hand. Warburton's cheek had certainly blanched as the ruddy current had rushed to his heart to swell the beating there; but the weakness—if weakness it could be called—was speedily con-

quered. Not a word did he reply to his assailant's coarse remarks ; but with his face hardened into an expression of stern determination, he stood as if calculating his chances.

You know how much more quickly ideas can flash through the brain than they can be spoken or *a fortiori*, written ; and in about one-tenth of the time it will take you to read them, did the following ideas rush through his mind, as he stood proudly and bravely at bay :—

“Of course this is the escaped convict they call the Tiger. His dress is not the only thing that tells me *that*. The chance of taming him, I have just been wishing for, has been offered rather sooner than I expected, and under much unpleasanter circumstances than I could have wished. There's no doubt about it. I'd retire from the attempt, at present, with the greatest possible alacrity and pleasure ; but the slightest move at a retreat, I see, would bring him on me with that pistol, against which I, with my bare fists, would stand no chance. I need expect no mercy. He is evidently a madman. Must be. No sane man, no matter how degraded and brutal, could ever harbour such fury, as I read in his face, against one on whom he never set eyes, and who has never done him an injury. Was ever human face so distorted with rage and blind, senseless hatred ? If I am to die in youth, I had rather it had been on the battle-field like a soldier, than by the hands of a mad and half-drunken felon. I must watch and hope for an opportunity. He evidently takes a savage delight in ‘playing me,’ as he said himself. Let him. The longer he indulges in this pastime the better. While there is life there is hope. Some happy expedient, some unlooked-for chance may arise, and may Heaven bring the one or the other to my rescue. But if it be ordained that I am to die now, and that pistol does its murderous work, then without craven fear shall I meet my fate ; and may the Lord have mercy on my soul, and forgive me the sins of my youth.”

During this time—in reality only a matter of a few moments,

though the above ideas cover a great deal of paper—each stood with his eyes fixed on the other.

“Ah, you’d ought to know me,” said the convict with an attempt at a smile, which was merely a spasmodic working of the thin cruel lips, as he showed his teeth like a savage dog when it snarls. “We’ve met afore, we have, me and you. I ain’t a-going to turn you off just yet. I’m a-going to amuse myself a bit with yer. Going to have a bit o’ badger-baiting first; and s’elp me, Bob, I ain’t ever baited a badger, prime fun as I’ve had, as gave me the sport you will. And mind, look’ee here, I holds this here ready to fire it into your black heart if you so much as moves a foot, or lifts a hand, or raises a cry, that I will——”

And here the wretched man rolled his eyes, bloodshot with drink and passion, and swore a volley of oaths, to hear which, reader, “would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood.”

Not one symptom of fear did Warburton betray now. He had by this time braced his firm nerves until they were like iron, and his eyes still rested unflinchingly on his would-be murderer.

“Yes, we’ve met afore. D’yer see these clothes? Ain’t much of a suit to look at, is it? Well, you’re the tailor as made ’em for me. You was the chap as put ’em on me. It was all along o’ you—*you!* When I thinks of it I can’t hardly keep this here bullet out o’ you. But you’ll have it, presently, and no mistake. I’ve an old score agin you to wipe out, and the only thing as’ll wipe it out’s your blood. Not the blood from your hand or your finger, but the blood as comes straight from your heart. *That’s* the only sort as ’ull do the trick clean and proper. Yes, you was the chap as collared me for ‘poaching,’ *you’d.* called it; taking what’s mine as well as anybody else’s, is the way I looks at it, and the proper way it is too. Yes, you was upsides then, my spry lad, but you’re upsides down now, my fine covey.”

For the first time Warburton spoke, and his quiet, dignified composure was a marked contrast to the hoarse, vulgar tones, the excitement, and the coarse, savage banter of the other.

"If by a most extraordinary coincidence you are the man I captured some years ago, I now tell you that I handed you over to justice not so much for poaching (as I *do* call it—and that means stealing what belongs to other people) as for a cowardly and murderous attempt on an honest man's life, a dastardly crime you are now preparing to repeat."

"Oh, don't he talk nice? Ain't he got the gift o' the gab, just? Blowed if he don't beat the chaplain! But *he* didn't find it go down with me, and don't *you* go a-trying it on, my fine young feller. You don't think small beer o' yerself, do yer, in them fine clothes? With your red weskit bustin' out into buttons all over, and that there spruce little gold cap stuck on to the side o' yer head till it makes a chap think you've got a dab o' cobbler's wax inside to prevent it fallin' off, and your gold stripes down your legs. I suppose you think stripes on the back's good enough for *me*. I tell yer what it is, I'll give yer something worse than stripes on the back, my noble swell. But it ain't fine clothes as makes the man, my gay young spark. Here, take off that there cap in the presence of your superiors. Take it off to a man what's a better man than you are, as he'll soon show you. Take it off, I say, d'ye hear?"

The proud blood crimsoned Warburton's brow. But a bright, brave thought flashed upon him, and he carried it out as bravely as it had been conceived.

Apparently in obedience to the convict's command, he lifted his hand, a movement that a few moments before would to a certainty have brought the murderous onslaught upon him, but which was now regarded with grinning complacency by the convict as a token of humble submission on the part of his enemy.

In one second the cap was off; in the next it was dashed hard and full into the convict's face; and before he had time to see or think, his hand holding the pistol was in a vice-like grip.

Dick Warburton was on to him!

CHAPTER III.

THE cry of rage which escaped the convict was like the howl of a wild beast caught in a trap, with this difference, that, instead of ending in the low growl of the dumb creation, it died away into muttered imprecations of the vilest blasphemy. Man is often a far greater brute than the brutes themselves. Though a burly, stout-built rascal, accustomed in his palmy days to lord it over his fellows in drinking-booths and dens of infamy, his muscles had not been even then a match for the athletic and trained limbs of Dick Warburton. Much less now, after his incarceration and his constant punishment of bread-and-water diet, was he able to cope with his former antagonist. Brutality, however, in its most degraded form, supplied him with weapons which his adversary, in the superiority of his nature, would not have deigned to use, and the struggle was thus placed on a more equal footing. The wretched creature, finding his revolver useless, had recourse to nature for his weapons of attack. Not the fists, or rather the fist, for one only was at liberty. That would have been a British procedure which I would not have paused to animadvert upon. The brute used his thick-booted feet, and kicked with might and main. But Warburton's shins had graduated in the foot-ball grounds of Rugby, and afterwards on Woolwich Common, in the arts of becoming tough and getting out of the way; and many an indelible testimonial from these rough schools did they still bear in the shape of scars and seams.

"Kick away, you savage," muttered Warburton, "you won't do much harm there; and that's only child's play compared with your pistol."

Unable to do much damage in this direction, the convict turned his attention to an infinitely more brutal form of attack.

He fastened on to Warburton's disengaged hand with his teeth, and biting through to the bone, he held on like a bull-dog. The struggle was more like one between a man and a wild beast than between man and man.

"You brute, they wern't far wrong when they called you a tiger," thought Warburton, as he felt the teeth tearing his flesh and crushing his bones.

The pain was excruciating, but still Dick Warburton kept his wits, though not altogether his temper. That would be too much to expect from any man. It was not a time at which, nor was it an adversary with whom, to be particular regarding those clauses of the English pugilistic code, which lay down that the fists are the only allowable weapons, and that hitting below the waistcoat is not fair. When a man sinks his humanity by laying hold of you with his teeth like a wild beast he forfeits all claim to be considered as a fellow-creature, and you are justified in hitting him with anything and anywhere you can, to induce him to let go his hold. But Dick Warburton, though he thought all this, was not in a position to carry out anything of the sort. Both his hands were powerless for attack. One was grasping by the wrist the hand which held the pistol ; the other was pinned as effectually as if a bull-dog were holding on to it. In this emergency, it may occur to the reader as unaccountably strange that Warburton did not shout for assistance. It would be a very natural reflection on the part of the reader, and one which would have occurred to myself, had I not, from personal experience, known better.

I remember in China, some years ago, a somewhat similar struggle between a Chinaman and a brother officer. Indeed, I was sleeping in the next room, and being a light sleeper, a single shout for assistance would have been sufficient to bring me and half-a-dozen others to the rescue. Nevertheless, the officer, though the attack was of the most murderous nature, and he was in most deadly peril, struggled on in silence with his assailant until he managed to get him down on the ground, and then, only

then, when the danger, comparatively speaking, was over, did he raise a shout for assistance, which at once brought half-a-dozen brother officers on the scene. The scuffle had been one of long duration, for many of us had heard the sounds of tumbling and struggling about the room, and had ascribed it to the vagaries of some wild spirit of the night, who had been dining "not wisely but too well," and was now making eccentric attempts to undress and get to bed. As we examined the keen deadly knife which had been wrested from the would-be murderer's grasp, and the bleeding scratches round our friend's eyes, the traces of the Chinaman's abominable attempts to gouge them out with his long talons, we shuddered at the narrowness of the escape.

"But why on earth didn't you holloa at first?" we asked.

"The only way I can account for not doing so," replied our friend, "was, that every nerve, every faculty, every thought, was concentrated in the struggle itself; and it was only when my brutal assailant was comparatively in my power, and the danger passed, that I thought of calling out."

Now, I suppose it was just the same with Dick Warburton. So intense and absorbing was the struggle for life, that, as the officer just quoted observed, "every nerve, every faculty, and every thought was concentrated" on one point. Deprived of the use of both hands, he was unable to strike, but he managed to get his right arm (it was the left hand which held the convict's wrist) behind the other's head, which he then dragged and pressed down into a low position. Then suddenly uplifting his knee, he gave with it an upward crushing blow that almost broke his opponent's jaw, and made it let go its hold. The struggle now presented an aspect revoltingly hideous. The convict's face was deluged with blood (the effect of that crushing knee blow), which not only ran down his clothes, but also smeared Dick Warburton's face, as the two struggled in the close and deadly embrace, Warburton's released hand, though lacerated and bruised to the bone with the other's teeth, was soon vigorously employed, but

still the convict held the pistol with a fast grip. It is not a very difficult thing to prevent a man from using a weapon if you once get a firm hold of his wrist ; that is to say, if you are pretty evenly matched in strength. But it is a very different thing to take a pistol from a determined man's hand, no matter if you are greatly his superior physically. He grasps the crooked serrated handle, while you have only the straight smooth barrel to lay hold of. I do not know a better plan for effecting this object than that adopted by Warburton. A smart blow on that portion of the human frame familiarly termed "the funny-bone," sends a galvanic kind of shoot all down the nerves of the fore-arm, and causes the hand, if it is clenched, to fly open with a spasmodic action. With this in his mind, Warburton drove his antagonist towards the mantel piece, and choosing his opportunity, jogged the elbow against the corner with all the force he could bring to bear on the act. In obedience to the strange law of nature, the hand flew open, and the pistol fell from the murderous grasp. The rattle of the weapon on the floor was the pleasantest sound that had fallen on Dick Warburton's ears since he had entered his room. A few more struggles, growing fainter and fainter, a few hoarse oaths dying away into a half-stifled sob of rage, and the blood-bedabbled convict was on his back, with his conqueror over him. Dick Warburton now paused to consider the next move, and also to take breath, for you don't engage in a five minutes' hard struggle for life without losing some of that useful commodity, no matter how "fit" you may be. He first, however, took the precaution of rendering his fallen adversary completely powerless by kneeling over him, with a knee on each muscle of the arm. This is a most effectual way of keeping an obstreperous man quiet, when once you have got him down. Possibly Dick Warburton's school recollections supplied the hint, for many a time in a play-ground have I been subjected to the process, and well do I recollect the utter helplessness of the position ; and when, as sometimes happened in my case, your youthful tormentor shows how easily you are in

his power by sucking an orange or cracking nuts the while, your mental disquietude exceeds even the discomfort of body.

Warburton's mind was not now in that philanthropic frame it had been in a short time before, as he had dreamily smoked his cigar on the ramparts. To have your life sought with the basest treachery, to be reviled in the coarsest language, to be kicked with savage brutality, to be bitten with the ferocity of a wild animal, are together enough to inflame a man's blood, be it gentle or simple, to fever heat; and as Warburton surveyed the creature who had wrought all this, prostrate and in his power, the dangerous glare of combat still flashed from his eyes. It takes a considerable time to cool down from the heat of such a contest. With Warburton, however, the calm followed the storm more speedily than would have happened in the case of ninety-nine out of a hundred young men. From his school-days, Dick Warburton had always enjoyed the reputation of being a cool hand, and he now, if he has not done so before in the reader's eyes, fully proved himself worthy of the reputation. His first idea on getting his captive down had been to call for assistance to secure him, and then to give him in charge of the guard until he could be handed over to the civil authorities. The next thoughts which occurred to him were worthy of a truly great mind. He thought of how he had tamed "the Demon," and he drew an analogy between that animal and the one beneath him. They had both been kickers and biters; both had been pronounced utterly irreclaimable. He had proved the fallacy of the general opinion pronounced in one instance; he would try and do likewise in this case. The subject certainly did not look a promising one, was his reflection, as he looked down on the face of his fallen foe. But to some minds obstacles are incentives, rather than dampers, and Dick Warburton's mind was essentially one of those whose courage mounts with occasion. One glance at that face would have been enough to deter almost any one from such an attempt as the regeneration of its owner. A phy-

siognoy, at the best of times degraded and brutal, it now beggared description in its repulsiveness. It looked the sort of countenance that, as some novelist says somewhere, "might have haunted a murderer in a nightmare." It looked, indeed, a face that might have served a painter as a model for murder personified, could any painter have ever wished to defile his brush by placing so ghastly and horrible an idea on canvas. In the glare of the eyes there was an intensity of hatred and rage as if those feelings had turned the brain; his cadaverous face was smirched with gore, with which the livid pallor contrasted hideously; the mouth was open, in reality panting for breath; but the look in the bloodshot eyes gave rather the horrible impression that he was panting for blood. At first he made a desperate struggle every now and again to free himself, accompanied by the most fearful oaths. But the hopelessness of these attempts soon became apparent, and he was perforce obliged to content himself with muttered imprecations as he ground his teeth in impotent fury.

"Listen to me," said Warburton, in calm and impressive tones. "You tried to take my life. You did your utmost——"

Here a pause was rendered necessary, for the very sound of Warburton's voice, though, with marvellous forbearance, he couched it in conciliatory tones, seemed to exasperate the convict beyond all bounds, and he made a desperate but utterly futile effort to free himself.

"It is useless your making any attempt to get from me," said Warburton. "Did you ever hear of returning good for evil?"

"No, and I don't want to hear neither, for I shouldn't believe it," was the reply, intermixed with a good deal of strong language.

"Suppose our positions were reversed—ah, would you?"

This sudden change in Warburton's language was caused by a sudden attempt to effect the supposed reversal.

"That game will do you no good. Now, as I was saying, suppose I had tried to murder you, and I was now where you are and you where I am now, what would you do?"

"Well, the first thing as I'd try to do would be to tear that oily, psalm-singing tongue of yours out by the roots, and then I'd lay my hands on to your throat, and squeeze the life out of you," was the blood-thirsty rejoinder, uttered with a gleam of diabolical ferocity in the eyes, quite in keeping with the brutality of the words.

"Exactly! I expected an answer something like that. Now, what would you say if, notwithstanding what you've just said and done, I were to tell you that I am inclined to return good for evil?"

"What would I say, eh?"

"Yes."

"Why, that you was telling a jolly big lie."

"But suppose I was to show by acts, not words alone, that I really mean what I say," went on Warburton with the most imperturbable coolness.

"Gammon!"

At this juncture, some young officers were heard approaching on their return from the mess, where the pleasant companionship of each other had kept them to this late or rather early hour.

"Now," said Warburton, "you hear the sound of voices. In two minutes those officers will be in this passage, and are pretty certain to look in here as they pass. If they didn't do so of their own accord, a single shout from me would be sufficient to bring them in, and we could tie you hand and foot, and give you in charge of the guard, to be handed over to the prison authorities. But I won't do anything of the sort. I'll show mercy. I'll lock my door, and if they try it, they'll conclude I'm away or asleep, and will pass on."

So saying, Dick Warburton rose to his feet, leaving the convict

free, and walked to the door just in time to lock it softly as the officers turned into the passage.

Quietly, but swiftly, the pitiless ruffian stretched his hand out to the pistol lying on the floor.

"Gammon! tell that to the marines!" he muttered, as the next moment a report rang through the building.

A deep groan, and Warburton falls heavily.

A hoarse oath, a crash, and the convict is through the window.

* * * * *

"It's a way we have in the army,
It's a way we have in the navy,
It's a way we have in the 'varsity,
To drive——"

"Oh, shut up, my dear fellow, you'll be awaking everyone in the whole block."

"Let's see if Dick Warburton's up. He was dining at the 'Rifles,' I know, to-night, and 's sure to have been pretty late."

"Yes," acquiesced a young officer, as he turned the handle of Warburton's door.

"Why, it's locked."

"Yes, I rather thought I heard the key turned as we entered the passage."

"Hallo! a pistol shot!"

"What can it be?"

"Didn't you hear that crash?"

"Rather!"

"And a groan, Yes, there's another."

"Burst the door in!"

"Kick it down!"

Crash went the door.

"Good Heavens! Dick Warburton murdered!"

"No; thank Heaven, he still breathes. Speak, Dick, speak—for Heaven's sake, speak, old fellow!"

"Lift his head up."

"There, that's it. Now send for the doctor."

"What's this? A cap! a convict's cap, with the number marked on it!"

CHAPTER IV.

DICK Warburton was not only popular in his own corps, where he was best known; he was an universal favourite throughout the garrison, which, being thrown so close together topographically, was knit into closer bonds socially than is generally the case with such a large garrison as that which occupies Gibraltar. Everyone knew everyone else almost as well as if they had been in the same corps together.

All over the Rock the news rushed like wildfire, that Warburton had been all but murdered by the escaped convict.

"Have you heard the news?" said Captain Montagu, of the Rifles, as he relieved Captain Hartopp, of the "King's Own," on guard away out at the North Front, as soon as the different military formalities had been exchanged between the guards, and the two commanders had approached each other familiarly.

"No, what is it?"

"Why, Warburton of the Artillery was nearly murdered last night by an escaped convict out at Europa."

"Good Heavens! what, Dick Warburton! One of the nicest fellows going!"

"I say, *have* you heard the news?" asked little Ensign Cheekington, of the Welsh Fusileers, as he met young Smartley, of the "Queen's," on the bathing stage at Rosia.

"Bar sells, old chap, what is it? If you allude to the demise of Queen Anne, I am in possession of that item of intelligence. Got my special private wire laid down to all the principal courts in Europe," replied Ensign Smartley, well knowing his questioner's overweening fondness for what is termed "taking a rise out of a fellow," and being, as he considered himself, too old a bird to be caught with this sort of chaff.

"No, no, upon my word, I'm in sober earnest this time, really," replied little Cheekington, *minus* the usual merry twinkle in his eye. "Why, last night we had the narrowest squeak of losing the best and most popular fellow in the garrison."

"Who can that be, I wonder? What, Warburton?"

"Yes, Dick Warburton."

"How? sudden illness?"

"Well, to have a bullet sent into you when you don't expect it may be looked upon as sudden, and I don't suppose it makes a fellow feel over well, so it may be called illness. But I think, altogether, attempt at murder is the right name for it."

"But by whom? and what for? I don't believe Warburton ever injured a man, woman, or child."

"All I can tell you, he was nearly murdered last night in his quarters by the convict who escaped yesterday evening. Why or wherefore, I don't know."

"I say, sergeant, have you heard about Lieutenant Warburton?" asked Bombardier Johnson of Sergeant Smith, as the former made his appearance on some matter of duty at the signal station, which was in charge of the latter non-commissioned officer. "Have you heard of the piece of work last night down at Europa?"

Sergeant Smith was sitting down at breakfast with his wife and family, while his assistants, a couple of artillerymen, kept watchful eyes seaward, and he paused in the act of raising a saucerful of smoking coffee to his lips.

"Lieutenant Warburton? No harm come to *him*, I hope," said Sergeant Smith, with an air of intense interest, which seemed to be shared by his wife and family.

It must be explained that the signal station—an important post in a place like Gibraltar—was in the charge of the artillery; and in that corps under the special charge of Warburton, in whose district it was. Hence the great interest in him evinced by the sergeant and his family.

"Well, pretty nigh as bad as it could be," replied Bombardier Johnson. "He was all but murdered last night by the convict that escaped just before tattoo."

"La!" exclaimed Mrs. Sergeant Smith, as she held up her hands, and dropped Johnny, the youngest born, off her lap.

"Oh goodness gracious me, oh my!" said Eliza Jane, the eldest born, as she picked up Johnny, and rammed him hard on to a wooden seat, just to take his attention off his head, the portion of his anatomy on which he had landed off the maternal lap. "Oh goodness! Fancy Mr. Warburton!"

"Dear, oh dear," said Sergeant Smith, "I'd sooner have lost a month's pay than that any harm should come to Lieutenant Warburton. I never know'd an officer die young that he wasn't called a promising young officer. But I never saw a young officer promise as much as Lieutenant Warburton. Why, he knows more of signalling than I do, and I was at it at Chatham when he was a babby."

"And took such notice of the children, too, whenever he came up here on his rounds of inspection," said Mrs. Smith. "Oh dear, oh dear."

"Yes, it was only yesterday he gave Johnny a sixpence, and Johnny put it into his mouth, and nearly choked himself," remarked Eliza Jane, with great feeling.

"But what was it for?" asked the sergeant. "What has the convict to do with him, or he to do with the convict?"

"Ah, that's just it. What indeed! That's what they want to

know down at Europa, and can't find out. When I left, Mr. Warburton was still half insensible, and couldn't or wouldn't give any account of the affair."

"And did the convict get away?"

"Yes, clean away. The men of Mr. Warburton's battery are that wild, they don't know what to be up to. The colonel's confined the whole lot to barracks, for they were going to break out and scour the Rock, and they swore if they caught him they'd lynch him."

"Bless me," said the sergeant, "it's the worst piece of business I've heard of for many a long day."

The matter was hardly less keenly discussed by the assistant signalmen outside, one of whom had been in the room when the bombardier imparted his startling intelligence.

"I say, Bill," said Gunner Tomkins to Gunner Mason, "Lieutenant Warburton was all but killed last night by that escaped convict we fired the alarm gun about last evening, just before tattoo."

"You don't mean for to say that?" said Gunner Mason, desisting in open-mouthed horror from the act of bending a flag on to the signal halyards, whereby the community of Gibraltar was kept in ignorance of the fact that a full-rigged ship was in sight, for fully two minutes longer than it would otherwise have been, for which I venture to state it was not one whit the better or the worse.

"Yes, I do, though."

"I wish it was that there convict I was running up to the yard-arm now, that I do," said Gunner Mason, as he hauled at his signal halyards with a will, and ran his flag up savagely.

"I have rather a startling piece of intelligence to communicate, sir," said Captain Harcourt, A.D.C. to his Excellency the Governor of Gibraltar, as he entered the breakfast-room, where his chief, with his two daughters, were assembled.

"What is it, Harcourt?" asked the Governor, a fine specimen of an English gentleman and an English soldier.

"Yes, what can it be?" asked the two girls in the same breath.

"Well, you recollect a convict escaped last evening from the civil prison?"

"Yes, certainly; we heard the signal gun when we were at dinner," said His Excellency.

"Yes, and Amy would look under the bed and into all the cupboards in our room before she'd go to sleep," said the elder girl.

"I'm sure *you* needn't talk, Gertrude," said the younger; "I know you woke me in the night with a fearful scream, dreaming that the convict was standing over you with a revolver in one hand and a dagger in the other."

"Come, come, nonsense! never mind, never mind," said the old Governor. "What about the convict, Harcourt?"

"Why, I was out for my usual ride this morning, sir, on beyond the Spanish lines, and I met Captain Joyce of the Artillery, who told me that poor Warburton of his corps was attacked last night in his own quarter by this wretched convict, and left for dead on the floor of his room, where he was found a few minutes after the attempted murder. He is still insensible, I believe, or, at all events, partially so."

"God bless me!" said the Governor, with evident emotion; while the tender hearted girls, with the tears of womanly sympathy and pity springing to their eyes, turned pale as lilies.

"What, the clever Mr. Warburton!" exclaimed the elder. "Oh, how shocking!"

"Mr. Warburton, who wins nearly all the garrison steeple-chases!" ejaculated the younger; "oh, how dreadful!"

"We must have him here, Harcourt, at once. Girls, you must nurse him. Harcourt, see that my horse and yours are ready immediately after breakfast. I will ride myself out to Europa to

enquire after him, and to offer him the hospitality of the Convent.* See that rooms are at once prepared for his reception, Harcourt. And, girls, have a look at them yourselves, and make them as much as possible like what his own home would be. I look upon Warburton as a most valuable young officer."

Thus spoke the kind-hearted old Governor of Gibraltar.

The reader has thus seen how, from the North Front to Europa, from the signal station on the summit down to the Convent at its base, the Rock of Gibraltar was moved by the intelligence of Warburton's attempted murder. A little later on in the day parties were out all over the Rock searching for the would-be murderer. So incensed was the whole garrison against the dastardly assassin that large numbers of volunteers joined in the search, amongst whom were many officers. As to the men of Warburton's battery, who had been allowed out of barracks later in the day, they were like bloodhounds in their eagerness to track the fugitive. But, notwithstanding all this, night came on and the convict was still at large. The next day the search was renewed with a similar result. The conclusion was then come to that the desperate wretch had probably thrown himself into the sea, preferring death by drowning to recapture. One thing was certain, everyone thought, he could not be on the Rock, it had been searched in every direction, and after the third day the search was given up.

* The name the residence of the Governors of Gibraltar goes by. It was, I believe, formerly a convent, or more probably, it stands on the site of an old convent, and is situated in the town at the foot of the Rock.

CHAPTER V.

LUCKILY for Dick Warburton the wound was not a fatal one. The bullet, which had been aimed with deadly intent at his heart, glanced off a button of his mess-jacket, and instead of going straight, inflicted an oblique wound, which, though deep, missed any vital part.

Like all men of energy, pluck, and determination, he disliked any fuss made about him in sickness; and though deeply sensible of and grateful for the good-hearted old Governor's kind offer to have him at the Convent, he preferred remaining in his own quarters, under the care of the artillery doctor, and amongst his own brother officers, whose attention and affection nothing could surpass.

Thanks to an iron constitution, backed by iron nerves, Dick Warburton was off the sick-list, and reported fit for duty, in a little more than a week after the occurrence.

All this time nothing more had been heard of the convict, and it was generally agreed that he had been ere this food for the fishes. Warburton was of course obliged to give some explanation of the matter, and the story about the poaching affray went the round of the garrison, and was much commented upon as a most extraordinary coincidence.

"I suppose he *is* drowned, as they've not come across him," thought Warburton as he lay on his bed; "he can't have remained on the Rock and escape the vigilant searches that have been made. But if he is not dead, and I ever come across him again, I'll——"

"Kill him." Is that the conclusion of the sentence which you in your own mind anticipate, reader? If so you are wrong, and have not yet thoroughly understood Warburton's character.

"I'll never rest until I make him feel some repentance for what he did," was what Warburton *did* say to himself; "it is my firm opinion," he went on, "that had he really believed I intended to befriend him it could not have been in his heart, it could not have been in any human heart, no matter how black, to do as he did. But the whole experience of his life, I suppose, had made him utterly unable to comprehend such a thing as returning good for evil. He never saw it, and therefore could not realize it; a coarse, untutored, savage nature never believes in what it has never seen. He, therefore, when I talked to him of returning good for evil, thought I talked either like a fool or a knave. He knew I wasn't the former, and therefore concluded I was the latter, and that I was merely, under the cloak of soft words, laying some deep trap which he could not understand; and it was in this belief he acted as he did. Therefore I consider 'the Tiger,' if he lives, is still to be tamed. Q. E. D."

Thus not once, but constantly did Warburton argue within himself as he lay in forced inaction of body, an inaction which by no means communicated itself to his mind; and by the time he was up and once more in harness, which, as I have said, was in a little more than a week, his determination to convert his dastardly assailant into a respectable member of society, if ever the opportunity was offered him again, became a fixed idea in his sound, vigorous mind.

In the district of our hero—for he *was* a hero, and the best type of one too—there was a small battery of two guns in an isolated part at the back of the Rock, and thither on a private tour of inspection he wended his way, within a day or two after his return to duty. The sun was hot, and, after his recent serious wound, being somewhat out of condition, he sat on a large boulder to rest and cool himself. The path he had traversed was merely a goat-track, which he himself had discovered and adopted as a short cut on his periodical visits to this lonely portion of his district. As one naturally does when sitting in the open air, he

surveyed the landscape and the different natural features near him with a lazy curiosity. First he gazed in dreamy admiration on the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean beneath him; then he gazed at the signal-station high above his head, and then he took to inspecting the objects nearer to him.

"I never noticed that crack or fissure in the rock before," he remarked, as he at the same time carelessly chucked a large pebble in the direction of his glance.

The stone fell inside, and produced a hollow echoing sound.

"Why, it must be a sort of cave. I shouldn't wonder if some of these Spanish smugglers knew a little more about it than I do at present. However, we'll soon acquire some further knowledge on the subject."

So saying, Warburton approached the fissure, and found it sufficiently high to admit of his entrance with a little stooping. On advancing three or four paces, he found that the cave—for such it seemed to be—became considerably wider and higher. This he discovered by extending an arm on either side of him, and then above his head, the whole interior appearing pitch dark to his eyes fresh from the dazzling sunlight outside. The spirit of exploration now seized him, and he advanced slowly, groping his way.

I must here explain that it was not sheer idle curiosity that tempted him onward. It was his duty as an officer of the garrison—more especially as an officer belonging to the scientific branch of it—to make himself thoroughly acquainted with anything noteworthy which he deemed had hitherto escaped observation. The Rock of Gibraltar is in several places pierced to a considerable distance by these natural subterranean passages, and Warburton thought this might be one of these. At all events, the discovery was worth following up. Suddenly, as he cautiously felt his way, a stone rolling, as if displaced by some footfall in front of him, attracted his attention.

"Some goat, I suppose; or perhaps one of these rock monkeys



"He hurled himself into space."—p. 301

taken up his abode here, and retreating before my advance," thought Warburton. "Looks upon my visit as an unwarrantable intrusion, no doubt. I tell you what it is, one of those apes would be rather a nasty customer to tumble over in the dark. Hallo! there go several more loose stones rolling away. That's never a monkey or a goat! Can it be——"

The thought quickened his pulse. Yes, could it be the convict? Could this be the hiding-place in which he had baffled pursuit? He stood still. Again there was more rolling of stone, but this time the sound came from *behind him*, and seemed as if no longer caused by a stealthy footfall, but by something hurriedly scrambling along towards the opening. Whatever it was, man or beast, it had managed to get past him in the dark. Yes, there it was. On turning sharply round, he could see it between him and the daylight, a human form of some sort, making off as fast as it could. As quickly as he was able to get over the rough, unfamiliar ground, Warburton followed in pursuit. It is much easier to get into a scrape than out of one. Now a dark cave is exactly the reverse. It is much easier to get out than in; and Warburton gained the outside in about a quarter of the time it had taken him to penetrate into the interior. Nevertheless, he failed to come up with the object of his pursuit, whose manifest troglodyte habits gave him an advantage in locomotion. The fugitive evidently knew every inch of the ground, for he got over it rapidly, while Warburton slipped about over the loose rolling stones and the jagged rock.

Yes, it was the convict! As he emerged into the broad daylight, with Warburton hot in pursuit, a couple of yards behind him, the hideous particoloured garb of coarse flannel, studded with broad arrows, bespoke the man. Without looking back the miserable creature made straight towards a jutting rock only a few feet from the entrance to the cave, and with a blood-curdling oath, which ended in a yell as he turned over in mid-air, he hurled himself into space.

With an exclamation of horror on his lips, Warburton rushed to the very edge of the dizzy height, and peered over, expecting to see the body dashed to pieces against some projecting rock. It fell clear, however, and all huddled up, sank like a stone into the deep sea.

With wonderful nerve, only equalled by his agility, Warburton sprang downward from crag to crag, from bush to bush, from ledge to ledge. Surely some good angel guided his footsteps. In a marvellously short space of time he reached the margin of the sea just as the convict's body rose to the surface for a few moments, head downwards, and motionless.

"He *shall* not die with that oath on his soul, if I can help it," said Warburton.

With these noble words on his lips, the true-hearted young fellow hastily took off his boots, his cap, his pouch-belt, and his jacket, and threw them on one side. Then, with great presence of mind, notwithstanding all his hurry, he threw a small cane he held in his hand, to mark the spot where the convict had just sunk for the second time, and plunged in after it. A few vigorous strokes brought him to where his extemporized buoy floated, and looking down into the clear water he could see the body slowly sinking lower and lower. A dive, a few sturdy downward strokes, and his hand grasped the collar of the drowning, or, as he seemed to be, the drowned man, for he was perfectly still, and to all appearances, lifeless. This greatly simplified Warburton's task, and in less than five minutes the gallant young officer had snatched from the greedy sea what had seemed its certain victim. But after all it appeared as if the sea had only given up its dead. There was no semblance whatever of life in the body. By cutting and tearing the wet clothes away, Warburton speedily stripped it, and after dragging it out of the shade into the warm sunlight, he proceeded to rub it vigorously with his jacket. In a short time the operator had the satisfaction of seeing a tremor run through the frame, then a deep sigh came from the heaving breast, and the breath of life once more entered the lungs.

The convict recovered more speedily than is generally the case with half-drowned people, for in reality he had not been so much drowned as stunned by his concussion with the surface of the sea after falling from so great a height. He now turned on his side, kicked his legs about, and looked round him like a person awaking out of a deep sleep. He still continued, however, in a semi-unconscious state. Warburton could read in the glazed, lacklustre eye, that reason had not yet struggled back to her throne, from which she had been so suddenly and roughly cast. It may seem strange to talk in this exalted way of the reasoning power of a man who had proved himself so degraded a brute as this convict. But all human reason is enthroned. In some cases the throne is of burnished gold; in others it is pure white ivory; in others again, of rough, unpolished wood.

It is with an abrupt descent of ideas I record that the first thing reason did on regaining her throne in this case was to dictate the following :—

“Brandy! Ain’t any chap got a drop o’ brandy?”

This was uttered in a weak, feeble tone, and with a half-languid, half-impatient movement of his head from one side to the other. This last motion happening to bring his eyes on Warburton, he raised himself on his elbow with a spasmodic effort, and stared with a wild excitement in his gaze. The sight was an infinitely more potent restorative than even the brandy he had asked for would have been.

“What, *you*. No, no. I’m a dreamin’. He’s dead and buried by this time. I’m a bit light-headed through starving, and this ain’t the first time I’ve seen him, only to find it was a make-believe in my own head. What have I been up to?”

“You’re not dreaming,” said Warburton, gently. “I am not dead and buried. Far from it. I am still alive. I have been saved from an earthly grave to save you from a watery one.”

“Save *me*! What for? what for? I say. To send me back to that place? No. I swore as a chap *can* swear when his whole

heart's like a lump of fire, as I lay in that hole in the ground, like a rabbit, night after night, day after day. I swore I'd never be taken alive. And I won't be either. It won't take much to drown the little life that's left in me."

Here the desperate felon actually made an attempt to throw himself into the sea, from which he had just been so nobly and so gallantly rescued. But the same strong hand again saved him. Warburton stayed him with a gentle force.

"Ah, you can do anything you like with me now," said the convict, with something very like a hysterical sob in his throat. "I'm like a babby in your hands now. A hinfant could wallop me now. Yes, carry me back ; you'll be able to do that easy enough, for there ain't much left o' me. Starvin' for a whole week don't only make a chap light-headed ; it makes him precious light in the body too. It don't much matter. I'm a-dyin' now, and you may take me back to that there prison, shove the irons on agin, flog me for runnin' away, flog me agin for sending a bullet into you. Ah, but you'll only be flogging a dead body by then what won't feel your irons or your lashes no more. Why don't you let me die here instead of dragging me back to prison ? Ain't the blue sky as much mine as yourn ? Is it poachin' on the rich man's preserves, as they say, if I breathes a few mouthfuls o' fresh air ?"

The poor wretch was allowed to run on in this way without interruption ; but now pausing for want of breath, of which he had as yet a very scarce supply at command, Warburton tried what a few soft words of hope and comfort would do.

"I don't mean to take you back to prison. I'll shield you as much as ever I can from recapture. I'll give you food and clothing, and instead of dying now with nothing but bitterness and hatred in your heart, I hope you will live to know what it is to be happy and contented."

It is doubtful whether the convict heard the whole of these remarks. The recent shock to the system, exhausted by starva-

tion, had been more than it could bear, and he sunk back on the rock fainting.

"I must conceal him in the cave at once, and then get to barracks as quickly as I can for restoratives," said Warburton. "It would never do to leave him here, where he might be discovered at any moment. Poor unfortunate creature, how emaciated he is! It will not be much more than carrying a skinful of bones; I'll put on my boots first."

Taking the body up in his arms, Warburton ascended towards the cave by a rather more circuitous path than that by which he had descended to the rescue. It was some time before he gained the hiding-place, and set his almost lifeless burden down inside it. After covering the attenuated, shrunken form as well as he could with his uniform jacket, Warburton hastily descended once more to the margin of the sea, and wrapping the convict's tattered wet clothing round a great stone, sunk the bundle in deep water. Having accomplished this, Warburton made for his quarters as fast as he could by an unfrequented path along the sea-shore with which he was acquainted.

Shielding a criminal from justice—no matter how beautiful was the spirit of forgiveness which in this case was displayed—may strike the thoughtful reader as an act not altogether in accordance with those strict rules of honour by which it would appear Warburton was generally guided. But the young officer had not decided on the step without duly weighing it, and after doing so his conscience absolved him of all blame. Had not the prison authorities—the governor, the chaplain, the warders—in vain tried to humanize this man? Had not all their efforts in this direction tended, on the contrary, to make him a still greater brute? Why then send him back to a place where he had become, and would yet become, worse and worse? In this light, and a true light, I think, Warburton looked at the matter. He was not such a madman as to think that prisons were useless and unnecessary institutions; but in this case prison treatment had not cured but

aggravated a disease; and it was only rational to try another remedy which was at hand, and in which he believed implicitly.

The path along which Warburton traversed in double quick time, led to the identical natural port-hole in the face of the rock through which the convict had climbed by means of the rope-ladder on the eventful night of his escape. Reaching his quarters without, to his great satisfaction, having encountered a soul, Warburton at once exchanged his wet garments for a suit of flannels, and then rolled up a bundle of clothes for the naked outcast. He next proceeded to the mess, which at this time of the day was quite deserted by the officers, and there, with the cordial co-operation of a mess-waiter, who merely thought a boating pic-nic, or something of the sort, was on foot, he speedily obtained a substantial supply of cold meat with bread and butter. Thus provided with clothing and food, and a flask full of brandy-and-water in his pocket, Warburton retraced his steps with all possible speed along the unfrequented path to the cave. Here he found the convict occupying the same position in which he had been left. He had evidently been the whole time of Warburton's absence, as he was still, in a state of semi-insensibility. The first thing the good Samaritan did was to unscrew the top of the flask and pour some brandy-and-water into the silver cup, which was part and parcel of it. Even the gurgling of the liquid seemed to have a refreshing effect on the convict, for he opened his eyes, and languidly raised himself on his elbow.

"There, try that," said Warburton, handing him the cup.

The convict was not slow in responding to this invitation. He eagerly carried the cup to his lips with such a trembling hand that the metal rattled against his teeth as he drank. He managed, however, to drain its contents to the uttermost drop, and then, with a sigh of relief, he handed back the cup.

"Well, how do you feel after that?" asked Warburton.

"I feels a deal better."

"That's right. Now just you slip on that coat and trousers, and then you'll be all ready for your grub."

The convict made a hasty toilet, while Warburton untied his paper package and displayed to the enraptured gaze of the starving creature a fowl cut up into pieces, together with several substantial and thickly-buttered slices of bread.

"There now, suppose you commence operations with that," said Warburton, handing a wing of the fowl on a slice of bread and butter. "Don't bolt it," he added with a kind smile, as the convict seized the proffered morsels with ravenous avidity.

Notwithstanding this injunction, however, the wing disappeared with marvellous rapidity; and the way in which the convict crunched the small bones of the pinion was more like a famished wolf than a human being.

"There, never mind the bones," said Warburton. "Here's a piece of the breast; "that's better for you."

In silence the convict took what was handed to him, but this time he did not raise it to his mouth. He stole a curious, furtive glance at Warburton, and then looked on the ground.

"Come, fire away," said Warburton, cheerily. "Ah, perhaps that bone has stuck in your throat, and you want something to wash it down before resuming the attack."

The convict shook his head, dropped the piece of fowl, and carried both hands up to his face. For some moments he remained in this position. Then through the thin, trembling fingers there rolled a tear, then another, then there was a heaving of the breast, followed by a partially suppressed sob.

Quietly Warburton rose from the stone on which he was sitting and with a promise to return that evening, left the convict to his own meditations.

CHAPTER VI.

AT an early hour after mess that evening Warburton withdrew from the cheery society of his brother officers, amidst a running fire from them of "Where are you off to, Dick?" "Don't go, old fellow." "Stop and be sociable." "Here, I'll go with you," &c. Dick Warburton, however, was not the man to be turned away from his own line; and declining, in a cheery, off-hand manner, all offers of companionship, he left the bright, comfortable room, and strode across the square through the dark night to his own quarters.

Here some time was occupied in the completion of certain arrangements, and then finally providing himself with a dark lantern, and throwing over his shoulders his voluminous military cloak, the capacious pockets of which were well filled, he sallied forth on his mission of charity. A walk of about twenty minutes brought him to the cave.

"Well, and how are you feeling now?" he asked, as he entered.

"Better, thankee," replied the convict, in tones strangely soft for him. The "thankee," too, was a noteworthy step in the right direction.

"That's right," said Warburton, as he withdrew the dark slide from his lantern, and seated himself on a large stone. "There, we'll throw a little light on the subject. I've brought you something for your breakfast to-morrow morning—some cold meat, hard-boiled eggs, and bread-and-butter. And here in this large bottle you'll find some capital cold tea. First-rate thing; cold tea, for refreshing one. It's what I generally carry when I go on a long day's shooting, and I find I do more work on it than on anything else. I dare say a pull at it now wouldn't do you any harm,"

concluded Warburton, as he poured some of the tea into a tin mug he had brought with him, and handed it.

The convict took the mug and raised it to his lips, but lowered his hand again without tasting the beverage. There was a strange rising in his throat not favourable to deglutition.

"What are you a-doin' this for?" he asked in quite a savage tone. "Do you want to fatten a chap up as they does the Christmas turkeys afore they kills 'em?"

Warburton read the man like a spelling-book story, and at once put the proper construction on this sudden return to his old ferocity of manner. The poor creature's heart was evidently filling with soft feelings to which he was so utterly unaccustomed, that he did not know what to do with them; how to bottle them up, or how to give them vent, and in his embarrassment he took refuge in a manner which was completely at variance with what his heart would have dictated.

Taking no notice of the question, as if he had not heard it, Warburton proceeded to heap more coals of fire on his would-be murderer's head.

"Now I'm going to smoke a pipe, and I dare say a few whiffs wouldn't be a bad thing for you. Here's a pipe for you. You'll find it a first-rate one to draw. It's an old friend of mine, and I'll make you a present of it. And here's some 'baccy.'"

As the convict put out his hand to take the proffered delicacy, he attempted to say a few words of thanks, but the effort resulted in nothing more than a gurgle and a gulp in his throat. Of all the acts of thoughtful kindness this last one had perhaps gone the straightest way to his heart. In silence the work of loading, lighting, and then puffing, was performed by both. The convict was the first to break the silence.

"Did I speak harsh-like and ongrateful, sir, when you gave me that there tea? 'Cause if I did, I didn't mean it. I felt as if I was goin' to make a babby of myself, and I *would* have if I hadn't pulled myself together a bit. So you see, sir, it was all along of

bein' grateful that I spoke *ongrateful*. Do you understand a poor chap, sir, when he's tryin' to say what's in his mind? But sayin' and thinkin', specially with us chaps as can't do much more'n write their own names, is two very different things. I used to find the words come easy enough when I was cursin', and swearin', and quarrellin'; but I've a kind of feeling now as if there was thoughts in my inside which was so new to me that I don't know what names they goes by. But I daresay you knows what they are better than I can tell you."

Here the convict paused, and puffed furiously at his pipe. It was all in vain, however; he could not restrain the tears which filled his eyes, and overflowed down his thin, sunken cheeks. The tears which spring to the eyes of a man—particularly such a hardened reprobate as this man had been—are drawn from the very innermost recesses of the heart. With women it is different—

"For women shed and use them at their liking,
But there is something when man's eye appears
Wet, still more disagreeable and striking;
A woman's tear-drop melts, a man's half sears,
Like molten lead, as if you thrust a pike in
His heart to force it out."

I do not mean to teach the doctrine that woman's tears are less sincere than man's, but simply that they are nearer the surface, and come more readily.

From the days of his childhood the convict had not known what it was to shed tears. That spring of bitter waters had early been dried up by the hardening influence of brutal passions, but now it welled up copiously to his eyes. The knotted lash had never drawn a single tear from him, but one act of kindness drew forth a shower.

"I ain't never been took this way afore," he murmured half apologetically, as he drew the back of his hand across his eyes. "Hunger, and thirst, and lickin' never did it."

"Yes, yes, I quite understand your feelings," said Warburton. "But what do you think of that baccy?"

"First-class, sir, first-class," replied the man, in a voice shaky with emotion; but whether caused by his penitence for the past, or intense appreciation of the tobacco, it is hard to say. Some of both probably. "I ain't never enjoyed a smoke like this here, sir," he observed, as he drew the pipe from his lips, and gazed affectionately on it.

"That's right. I hope you'll have many a smoke out of that pipe, and enjoy them all as much as this one."

"Thankee, sir, thankee, kindly. I don't deserve all this, I don't. Do you know what I was precious nigh doin' while you was away? I feel I can't keep it on my mind."

"No, what was it?"

"I was precious nigh makin' off altogether, and hidin' in another place."

"Why was that? Did you think I was going to betray you?"

"Well, sometimes, sir, that *would* come into my head. I couldn't make out how a chap as I well nigh——. Beg pardon, sir, a gen'l'man, I mean."

"Never mind," said Warburton with a smile, as he mentally contrasted the man's present politeness with his ruffianly coarse demeanour on the eventful night of the struggle. "It isn't the first time I've been called a chap. Go on."

"Well, I was goin' to say, sir, I couldn't make out how a gen'l'man as I'd all but murdered, and meant to murder, too, could behave to me more like a brother, aye, and more than most brothers. You see, sir, it was all so new to me, I couldn't take it in all at once. I couldn't at first understand it, any more than I could understand shaking a chap's hand in return for a smack in the eye. All my life, too, I'd been working on the principle that every gen'l'man's hand was agin me and the likes o' me, and what you've been believin' with all your might for forty years it's hard to get out of you in forty minutes. Sometimes I couldn't but

help thinking you was straight, and then the next moment I'd hear a noise, and I'd think it was you coming back with a file of soldiers, or a couple of warders to take me."

"But you believe now I'm quite straight, don't you? There's my hand on it."

"Indeed, sir, I do," said the convict, grasping the outheld hand, while his livid, wan face worked with emotion.

"Now we'll trust each other," said Warburton. "I shall leave you now, but to-morrow I shall return with some plan in my head for getting you away. I have not yet been able to hit upon a satisfactory one."

"I'm in your hands, sir, and I don't wish for anything better. Whatever you tell me to do, I'll do. If you was even to tell me to go back to that place, I'd go and give myself up, if you only promise to stick by me to the extent o' givin' me a kind cheery word now and then."

"No, that would be running too great a risk. I hope better things are in store for you.* Here are a couple of rugs I've brought for you to keep yourself warm during the night. Luckily the weather is warm, but a man who has first been starved and then nearly drowned, requires a little coddling. If you feel weak or chilly towards the morning, here's a first-rate little arrangement I've often used out on shooting expeditions, in which you can warm up your tea. You see you first put the spirit on, like this; and then you shove this on the top, like that; and then you pour your tea in, light up, and in two minutes it will be steaming. Here's a box of matches. You'd better shove 'em into your pocket, or you may forget where you put 'em. Now, good night."

"Good night, sir, good night. God bless *you*, sir, and God forgive *me*."

THE TIGER WAS TAMED.

* The reader is here requested to read again and reconsider that paragraph on page 305, in which Warburton justifies his conduct in conniving at the convict's escape.

CONCLUSION.

ON a certain fine morning, about three years ago, there were great rejoicings in the household of a country squire in the Midlands. The whole family, from the hale, hearty Old English gentleman and his sweet, matronly wife, down to the youngest born, a youngster of sixteen, rose from their beds, their hearts, one and all, old and young, bounding with the same happy thought, "Dick will be here to-day—Dick, who has been braving battle and pestilence, for his country's honour, far away in the land of the Ashantees."

Over the lodge gates, the tenants and the villagers have erected a triumphal arch, on which is inscribed, "WELCOME TO OUR ASHANTEE HERO. GOD BLESS DICK WarBURTON." Yes, he is "Dick Warburton," plain "Dick Warburton," in the hearts of high and low down in that part of the country.

At the extremity of a long grassy ride, piercing one of the home coverts on the estate, is a peaceful-looking little cottage, with ivy and honeysuckle twining over the rustic wooden porch, and peeping inquisitively through the little diamond panes of glass in the small bow-window. No heart up at the Hall, though it is the home of the returning hero's nearest and dearest relatives, beats higher with joyful expectation than a certain heart in this little cottage this morning. The owner is a stalwart man of about fifty, in a velveteen jacket and leather gaiters, who issues forth from his snug, peaceful little home at daybreak.

"I'll be the first to welcome him in the county, God bless him, and I'll have to walk to Hernby Junction to do it, as there ain't no train there so early," says the man, as he steps out with a joyful air over the dew-spangled grass.

The face which now wears so contented and happy a look was

once brutal and repulsive, but it was so when he was a felon in heart and in deed. Now he is, and has been for some years, under-keeper—and the best under-keeper on the estate—to Squire Warburton.

A few hours later the whole place is wild with excitement. The train has arrived with Dick Warburton from Hernby, where he has already received a sincere and touching welcome from one humble friend. By an immense concourse of friends, from the lord-lieutenant of the county down to the humble yokel, he is being escorted to the home of his forefathers. His face, burned with Afric's sun, beams with joy at being once more in that spot of England which, dear as all of it is to him, holds the innermost place in his heart. The men cheer and grasp his hand; the women smile through their tears, and think how brave and handsome he looks; and the band of the local volunteers play, "See, the conquering hero comes."

It is a proud moment for our old friend, Dick Warburton. But there may be some who think—Dick Warburton himself may think—that his proudest victory is that one which is proclaimed, not by triumphal arches, by shouts, by martial strains, but by that contented, happy face in the throng, which, with eyes dimmed by tears of kindness and joy, gazes with affectionate gratitude upon the hero who had won, not a military victory, but a human soul.

OUR TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOW.

CHAPTER I.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning, and the Indian sun, even at that early hour, was beating fiercely on two Englishmen, who were riding on horseback to an adjacent travellers' bungalow,* where a party was to assemble for the purpose of visiting the far-famed waterfalls of Cauvery.

"I tell you what it is, I sha'n't be sorry to get a roof of some sort between me and these scorching rays," observed the elder of the two, a certain Mr. Stewart, of the Indian Civil Service.

"I should think not; and a cane arm-chair, in a cool verandah, won't be a bad exchange for this hot saddle," said his companion, Captain Hamilton, of one of her Majesty's regiments stationed in the Mysore territory.

"The travellers' bungalow can't be far off; that's one consolation."

"Right you are, sir; there it is; not a doubt of it," said Hamilton, cheerily, as a turn in the road brought them in sight of a low

* Travellers' bungalows are feeble imitations of an English inn. They are to be found on every main road in India at intervals of from ten to twenty miles, and are maintained by government. The rule of the road as regards these bungalows is, that, after one night's sojourn, travellers move on in favour of newcomers, if required to do so.

white building, sheltered by a mango *tope*,* and standing a little back from the road in a compound, as the enclosed piece of ground round a house is called in India.

"Ah, yes, that's evidently it," said Stewart. "I rather fancy we must be the first arrivals at the trysting-place."

"Yes, apparently so, everything is so quiet," acquiesced Hamilton, as they turned their steeds into the compound.

"Hallo! there's a lady and a gentleman in the verandah."

"So there are, and they don't belong to our party either."

"That's a sell," said Stewart. "They are evidently travellers in possession. *Beati possidentes*."

"However, perhaps they have been here one night, and then we shall be all right."

By this time the two friends had ridden round to the back of the bungalow, where shouts of "Boy!" speedily brought forth a fat and elderly native, clad in a smart red turban and spotless white robe, who salaamed, and respectfully stood awaiting orders.

"This promises to be the best conducted travellers' bungalow I have ever come across, to judge from this old fellow's appearance," whispered Stewart, as he mentally contrasted the sleek and well-clothed old native with the usual unkempt and slovenly bungalow *mati*.

"Boy, master have stop here one night?"

"Yes, sar, master and missis stopping here plenty long time."

"By Jove! that's lucky." And congratulating each other in thus having the bungalow at the disposal of themselves and party for that night, the two friends, after ordering their horses to be watered and fed, entered the bungalow.

"Capital travellers' bungalow this," said Stewart, as he threw himself into a long cane arm-chair in a part of the verandah farthest from where the lady and gentleman were standing.

* A grove.

"The best I was ever in," said Hamilton, as he likewise sought a resting-place on the cool, comfortable chair, and threw his legs over the long projecting arms.

"Here, boy!"

"Sar," promptly responded the sleek and elderly native. Methusaleh himself, as an Indian attendant, would have been "boy" to the Anglo-Indian.

"Get some tea."

"Yes, sar."

"And look sharp about it."

"Yes, sar."

"Hi! I say, get tea ready for about half-a-dozen, and also some brandy and soda. We're expecting more."

"Yes, sar."

"I say that old fellow and his wife look uncommonly black at having to give up their comfortable quarters," said Hamilton, glancing at the lady and gentleman, who stood about thirty feet away glaring at the new comers.

"Well, they've no cause to complain, I'm sure. They've had their innings, and a precious long one it seems to have been from the bungalow *mat's* account."

"It's a mistake making a travellers' bungalow as comfortable as this. People, when they once get in, are loth to make room for others."

"What a strange-looking old couple!"

"I wonder what they can be. They're the sort of people one never meets in India."

"Yes, they look as if they had just dropped down from the moon."

"Or rather from some rich old retired tradesman's residence in the suburbs of London. They look as if they would be rather more at home there than in a travellers' bungalow in India."

"The old girl's rather what you may call inclined to *embon-point*."

"Yes, but she's nothing to the old boy. If she's inclined, he's most decidedly determined in that direction."

"What an extraordinary sort of turbaned head-dress she's got on, too."

"By Jove! they do seem angry with us. It's very unreasonable."

At this point of the conversation the tea made its appearance, very hot, and immediately following it, hotter still, came the fat old gentleman.

He endeavoured, however, and not very successfully, to conceal his heat under a cloak of polite sarcasm.

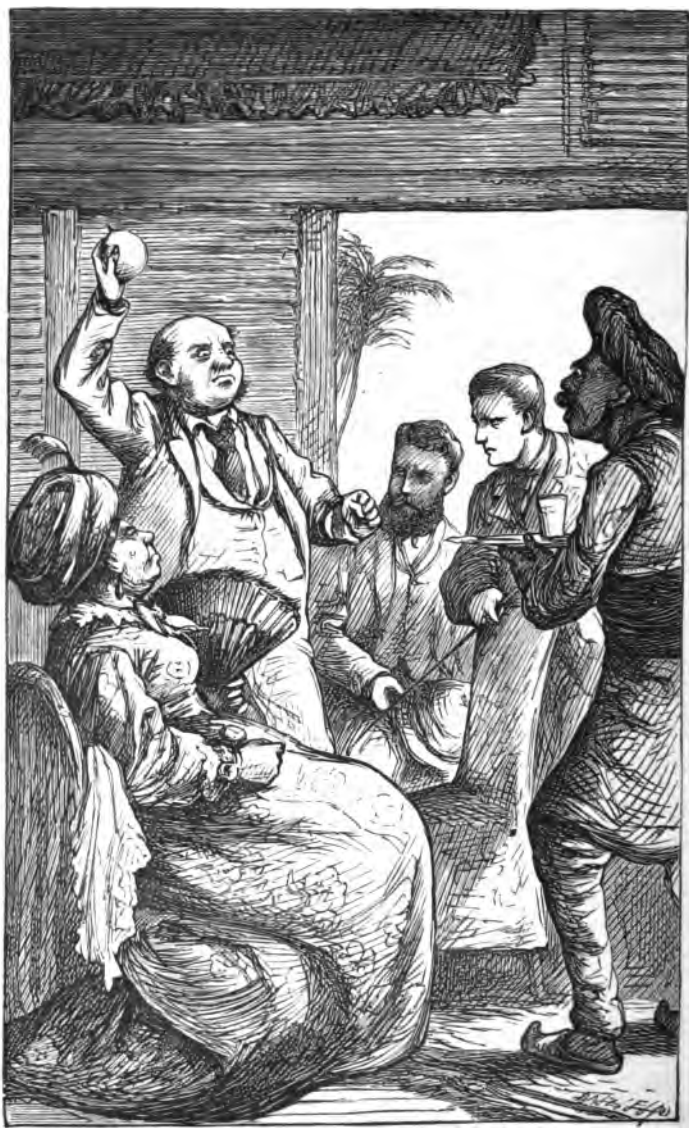
"Pray, make yourselves at home, *thoroughly* at home, gentlemen," he said, with a mock bow and a very red face. "Is there anything more you would like? Anything more in a small way? Or in a big way? Or in *any* way, in short? Pray, gentlemen, don't be modest. You will find such sensitive modesty as yours sad drawbacks to your careers in life."

Stewart and Hamilton were both thorough gentlemen, well versed in the ways of the world, and instead of "chaffing the old boy," as some men under the circumstances might have done, they courteously endeavoured to turn his wrath away with soft words. Had he been a younger man, it is possible they might not have been so forbearing; for though his words look mild on paper, there was a withering smile on his lips, fury in his eye, and inflamed passion in his face generally.

"We are sorry if we are putting you and the lady to inconvenience," said Stewart, very quietly, and without the slightest shade of ill temper in his tones or face; "but, at the same time, I fear it cannot be helped."

"Can't it, indeed? Dear me."

"And we shall require, too, I am sorry to tell you," said Hamilton, in tones equally polite as those of his friend, "nearly the whole of the bungalow to-night, as we are expecting a party of friends."



“What do you mean, you black rascal, by bringing in things I haven't ordered?”—p. 319

The fat old gentleman looked from one to the other, and, if possible, his face became a shade deeper in colour. He then tried to make a remark, but, in his then frame of mind, the only sounds he was capable of emitting were a puff and a snort.

"Be calm, Shillitoe, be calm," said the fat old lady in the turban-like head-dress, who now joined her husband.

"Arabella, go and tell the Atlantic to be calm when a hurricane sweeps athwart its bosom," said the gentleman, turning upon his spouse with a sudden fierceness that made her jump back a couple of paces with a nimbleness which her style of figure would not have led you to expect.

"I fear, madam," said Stewart aside to the lady, "that the gentleman, who is, I presume, your husband, is a little——"

Here he lightly tapped his forehead to indicate as delicately as he could, his impression that the gentleman in point was as mad as a March hare.

"Heat apoplexy, perhaps, madam—full habit of body—been out in the sun too much."

"Not a bit of it," snapped out the lady, "no more than you are. In fact, it's you and that other creature who are a little, or, rather, I should say, a great deal——"

Here she regularly whacked her forehead, until it sounded again, with a very fat forefinger, on which, by the way, a handsome diamond ring glittered.

"Be calm, Arabella, be calm," gasped the fat old gentleman.

"Be calm yourself, Shillitoe," said the stout lady, with somewhat indiscriminating asperity.

"So I am. So I am. As calm as a cucumber—I mean to say as cool," said the gentleman, as he made an eagle-like swoop on a plateful of mangoes which had just been brought in by the sleek attendant.

"What do you mean, you black rascal, by bringing in things I haven't ordered?" he roared.

Simultaneously with this polite inquiry, a very fine mango whizzed through the air and caught the sleek attendant on the back of the head, as he was retiring. Naturally curious, on the spur of the moment, to ascertain whence and why he was thus assailed, the sleek attendant turned round just in the nick of time to receive the second mango, a particularly ripe one, on the nose or thereabouts. Accepting these delicate attentions with a grateful salaam, the spirited native withdrew under a heavy volley composed of the remaining mangoes, plate and all.

Stewart's ire rose.

"Sir," he said, while the colour mounted angrily to his generally calm face, "your age alone forbids the infliction of that personal chastisement which your gross conduct would otherwise instantly and deservedly draw upon you."

"Age! Get out! Go on with you. Try it. Try it, my fine fellow. Come on."

And here the fat old gentleman whipped off his coat and struck an attitude which would hardly have inspired a professor of pugilism with admiration or terror.

"Shillitoe's blood's up, and I shouldn't wonder if Shillitoe chucked 'em both over the verandah into the prickly pears," said the lady proudly, as she witnessed the undaunted front of her lord and master.

"Come on," he repeated, bringing one ponderous foot down on the verandah with earthquake-like effect, and hitting himself a mighty blow on the chest with his clenched fist, just to show that he was sound in wind and limb, and eager for the fray.

Of course Stewart, with a calm and dignified demeanour, ignored the challenge altogether, and turned his back upon the foe, the very last thing he would have done had his antagonist been worthy of his steel.

Suddenly the light of a new idea broke over Hamilton's face, in which up to this moment amusement, amazement, and indignation had been struggling together.

"I say, Stewart," he whispered, "it suddenly dawns upon me that this may not be a travellers' bungalow after all, and that we may have been unconsciously guilty of an unwarrantable intrusion, in which case there is some excuse for the peppery old gentleman's behaviour."

"Phew!" and Stewart gave a long low whistle.

"Sir," he said, turning round, and speaking in the most conciliatory tones, "may I ask if this is not a travellers' bungalow?"

"Of course it is," rattled out the old gentleman, more angry, if possible, than ever, "of course it is. I should just like to see the man, woman, or child who'd try to argue me out of *that*. I'd precious soon turn him, her, or it inside out. Of course it is."

Stewart's question, simple and polite, seemed to have even a still more exasperating effect on the stout lady.

"Travellers' bungalow!", she said, tossing her head with scornful pride, "I should think it was, indeed. What a question to ask! The man's a born idiot. The idea of insinuating that this is *not* a travellers' bungalow! Why, this is the most insulting and irritating thing these wretches have as yet said or done."

And here she wheeled about, and with majestic tread and elevated nose, paraded about ten paces up the verandah, and the same distance back again, just by way of a demonstration.

"Oh, you know," said Stewart, turning round to Hamilton, "they're two lunatics. They admit it's a travellers' bungalow. There's nothing to be done but to take it quietly, and ignore their presence as much as possible."

With this the two friends turned their cane chairs with their backs towards the fat couple, and seated themselves.

"Have a cheroot, Hamilton?" said Stewart, offering one.

"No, thanks, I've got one here, old fellow."

In a few moments the two friends were puffing calmly and contentedly.

The operation did not bring the same calm and contentment to

the old gentleman and his wife. He had tried brute force ; he now altered his tactics and tried irony.

"Dear me, how very kind and considerate," he said, as he worked round their outer flank to their front.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the lady, as she squeezed round their inner flank near the wall. "Ha, ha, ha," she continued, fanning herself and tossing her head. "The idea of insinuating that this was *not* a travellers' bungalow ! Ha, ha, ha."

"Are you quite comfortable, gentlemen?" here interposed her corpulent spouse. "Is there nothing I can suggest for your amusement? There is the wife of my bosom. Perhaps, kind gentlemen, you would like to stick the wife of my bosom up at the other end of the verandah, with a pipe in her mouth, and make an Aunt Sally of her. Capital Aunt Sally she'd make, my lords. Warranted not to bob when she sees the stick coming. A broken nose, received at your noble hands, would be deemed an honour. Will not your lordships be tempted? Come, three shots a penny."

"Don't take the slightest notice of them," said Stewart to Hamilton, *sotto voce*.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the lady, as she trembled with rage from the turban downwards, "oh, this *is* amusing. Shillitoe, my dear Shillitoe, it is a shame of you to amuse yourself at the expense of these poor unfortunate half-witted creatures."

"Or, perhaps," continued the gentleman, in the same strain, "your lordships would prefer another pastime. Perhaps you would like to dash me to the floor, and dance a double hornpipe on my prostrate form. If it so pleases your royal highnesses, I need hardly tell you how honoured and flattered, and probably flattened as well, I should be by the performance."

"Oh, Shillitoe, Shillitoe, this is too good. I feel fit to die with laughing," said the lady, with an hysterical attempt at merriment.

"What time did the other fellows say they would be here?" asked Hamilton, quietly taking the cheroot out of his mouth and watching the smoke floating upwards as he awaited a reply.

"Beast!" hissed the lady.

"At nine. It's just close on that now. They may be here any minute," said Stewart, consulting his watch with a calm indifference that was infinitely more irritating to the fat old gentleman and his wife than vituperation or even personal violence would have been.

The former performed two or three spasmodic steps of a sort of a war dance, while the latter used her fan with such vehemence that it snapped off short at the handle, a catastrophe of which she evidently remained in utter ignorance, as she continued the motion with unabated vigour.

"This is richer and richer," she exclaimed, furiously fanning herself with nothing. "Ha, ha, ha. But it is wrong, Shillitoe, is it not, to laugh at these poor things of weak intellect?"

"Yes, it *is* wrong, I suppose; but I can't help it; I am *so* amused," said the old gentleman, with a smile so ghastly that it would have frightened a child into convulsions. "I am so amused; ha, ha, ha."

"And yet I don't know that it *is* wrong to laugh," said the lady, "for they are not human beings. They are only things—*things!*"

"Oh, I begin to see it now," said the gentleman, looking very hard at Hamilton. "Arabella, my love, this must be our long lost cheild."

"Oh, Shillitoe, you'll be the death of me! Ha, ha, ha."

"Say, kind sir," said the gentleman, plucking Hamilton by the sleeve to enforce his attention; "have you not a strawberry-coloured mark one inch to the right of the left shoulder-blade?"

"Oh, Shillitoe, you're too funny; ha, ha, ha, too funny; indeed you are."

"No, sir, I am not so marked," replied Hamilton, whom the action of plucking by the sleeve ruffled into retort. "But I tell you what it is, sir, were you twenty years younger, *you* would have been provided ere this with several black and blue marks about the region of the eyes probably."

"You have not a strawberry-coloured mark? Then you are *not* our long-lost cheild. Arabella, my love, he is *not* our long-lost cheild."

"Dear, dear, what feather Shillitoe's in!"

"Ah, I have it! I have at last got it. I *now* recognize him," said the old gentleman, staring straight into Stewart's face, and grinning like a wild cat in his efforts to smile sarcastically. "Yes, I recognize the familiar features."

"Oh dear, something rich is coming. Poor wretches, how I pity them, being bantered like this! And yet I can't help laughing. He, he, he."

"Yes, I see again that once familiar form, those well-remembered and admired features—that nose of pure cerulean hue, those eyes so aquiline in their intensity, that chin teeming with sweet reminders of the tender past."

"Shillitoe, Shillitoe, you make my sides ache."

"My dear, dear old friend, don't you remember those happy days when we were boys at school together? But of course you do. Your every action tells me that your capacious mind is full of vivid and tender recollections of little Johnny Shillitoe."

"Humour him a little by replying," whispered Hamilton; "and then very likely he'll get quieter. This is Bedlam outdone, and no mistake."

"No, sir, the reminiscences of my childhood do not include you."

"No! Oh, surely you must recall those days when we played

marbles together—alleytor, you know, knuckle-down-tight, and all that sort of thing, you know?”

“Oh, Shillitoe, let the poor creature alone. Ha, ha, ha. It's as good as a play. Better. *I* never saw a play like it; he, he, he.”

“No, sir, the periods when we respectively indulged in the pastimes you mention were not even coeval.”

“Do you mean to tell me positively, sir, that we have not grown up together in the closest bonds of friendship from childhood's earliest hours?”

“Most emphatically I can assure you, sir, that we have *not*.”

“Then, sir,” said the fat old gentleman, suddenly changing his tone from easy banter—or rather attempted easy banter—to a genuine and most heartfelt roar; “wha—what do you mean by this confounded familiarity?”

“Your plan, Hamilton, has not had the expected result,” said Stewart. “Humouring doesn't seem to have a quieting effect. On the contrary, he's nearly blown my head off. Let's move away to the other end of the verandah, and if they follow and continue to annoy us, some really very stringent measures must be adopted.”

“Yes, come along,” said Hamilton. And the two rose from their seats and walked down the verandah.

“In my whole experience of Indian life—and it has been a long and varied one—I have never known so outrageous a breach of all etiquette and decorum,” said Stewart, as they took up their new position.

“Oh, the only construction that can be put on it is that they are both maniacs,” said Hamilton. “But how they got here, and what they're doing here, is beyond one's comprehension. Hallo, there's Benyon of ours passing. He's overshooting the mark. I'll give him a holloa. Wh-o-oo!”

A responsive shout came from the other side of the compound.

"Come along," shouted Hamilton. "This is the place we're going to breakfast at."

This was about the climax of the fat old gentleman's wrongs.

"What! these wild savages yelling the war-whoops from the very verandah. I sha'n't be outdone, I can holloa too."

So saying he gave vent to a prolonged sonorous bellow, which brought Benyon into the compound at a smart canter.

"Bless me, what's the matter?" asked the young officer, as he rode close up to the verandah, under the horrible impression that murder in some atrocious form had been or was being committed.

"There, I think *that* rather took the shine out of your war-whoop, you savages!"

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked Benyon, in the utmost state of mystification.

"Don't take any notice of him," said Hamilton, leaning over the low verandah, and whispering into Benyon's ear, "go round and put your horse up and come in. It's an old maniac and his wife, who is nearly as bad, if not quite. They admit that this is the travellers' bungalow, and yet in the most outrageous manner you can possibly imagine, they object to anyone else putting up here."

"But this is *not* the travellers' bungalow," said Benyon.

"Nonsense! of course it is. Why, *they* never denied that. On the contrary, they were quite insulted at our suggesting the possibility of its not being a travellers' bungalow."

"But I tell you, my dear fellow, I know this road well, and the travellers' bungalow is about a mile further on."

"Oh, this must be put to rights at once," said Stewart, as he walked up to the infuriated old couple, followed by Hamilton.

"Sir," he said in his politest tones, "there evidently has been a great mistake ; but I really think, sir, you must share the responsibility of it with my friend and myself. Will you kindly, sir, give me *your* definition of the term 'travellers' bungalow?'"

"I sha'n't do anything of the sort, sir. Get out of it ; that's the only thing I've got to say to you about *this* travellers' bungalow. Get out of it."

"Humour them, Shillitoe, humour the poor crazed creatures, and then perhaps they'll go quietly," whispered the lady. "Talk to them kindly and moderately, Shillitoe, dear ; not that they deserve it, the wretches, but simply just to get rid of them."

"Well, sir," said the fat old gentleman, endeavouring with a gulp to follow his wife's advice and talk calmly, "I will oblige you, sir, with the definition you ask me for, though I should have imagined the term was a self-evident truth requiring no definition at all. A traveller's bungalow, sir, is, as I should have thought any child would know, a bungalow belonging to a traveller. Now, what is a traveller? A traveller is one who has traversed the globe. My wife and I have traversed the globe. How else do you think we got here? Did you take us for natives born and bred on the spot? No, sir ; we are both travellers. This bungalow belongs to us, and therefore it is a traveller's bungalow. Perhaps my wife and I are, for reasons which there is no necessity to impart to strangers, more tenacious of our rights to be considered travellers than most people would be. And when you hinted that this was not a traveller's bungalow, you, in point of fact, insinuated, sir, that we, this bungalow being ours, were *not* travellers ; and therein, sir, you wounded myself and my wife in what, for reasons above alluded to, is perhaps our tenderest point. There, sir, are you satisfied with that explanation?"

"Quite, sir. I hope you will be equally so with mine. In India, what is understood by a 'travellers' bungalow' is a building

for the accommodation of travellers, the rule being that after one night's occupation, the traveller, if required to do so by newcomers, is obliged to vacate the bungalow. Now, we assumed that this was one of these bungalows, and having learned from your servant, whom we mistook for the usual *mati* or attendant, that you had been here not only for one night, but for a considerable time, we, according to the rule of the road, looked upon ourselves as the possessors *pro tem.* of the bungalow. There, sir, nothing now remains for us to do but to tender our sincerest apologies for the unintentional intrusion, and to make you the only reparation in our power by leaving you as speedily as possible in the undisturbed possession of your own residence."

"I beg to endorse the words of my friend," said Hamilton, "and to add to them my own expressions of regret and apology."

Here the two friends bowed low and moved off.

"Stay, gentlemen, please," said Mr. Shillitoe, "until I walk to the other end of the verandah and back again, just to cool down a bit. Will you oblige me so far?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"Arabella, accompany me."

And here the corpulent couple walked away and engaged in conversation for a few moments. When they came back again there was a marked change in their demeanour. The lady looked gracious, and the fat old gentleman burst into a roar of laughter, which in volume of sound almost equalled the bellow with which he had nearly blown the roof off his own bungalow.

"Gentlemen," he said, as soon as he had recovered himself sufficiently to speak, "will you allow me the pleasure of shaking your hands?"

Here vigorous hand-shaking was indulged in, amidst some laughter.

"Allow me, gentlemen, to present you with my card."

And here the lately enraged, but now jolly, old proprietor of

the bungalow presented each of his visitors with a card, on which was inscribed—

“MR. JOHN SHILLITOE,
“Stanbuscookcam Lodge,
“Peckham Rye.”

“There, gentlemen, if, when we are all once more in the old country, you ever find yourself in the neighbourhood of Stanbuscookcam Lodge, and will honour it with a call, you will meet with a heartier, though I cannot add warmer, reception—ha, ha, ha!—than we gave you to-day. May I ask the names of my visitors?”

“Certainly. I am Mr. Stewart, of the Indian Civil Service.”

“And I, Captain Hamilton, of the —th Regiment.”

“Shillitoe,” said the lady in a loud whisper, “introduce me in due form.”

“Certainly, my love. Mr. Stewart, Mrs. Shillitoe; Captain Hamilton, Mrs. Shillitoe.”

The lady's bow, or rather curtsey, was wonderful to behold. Hamilton and Stewart thought she would never stop going down; and when she arrived at the lowest point of her obeisance, they thought, taking the rotundity of her figure into account, that she would never come up again. However, come up she did at last, very red in the face, but smiling graciously, and murmuring, “Delighted, I'm sure.”

“Now, gentlemen,” said Mr. Shillitoe, “I have a favour to ask you which I hope you will grant.”

“If it is in our power, most certainly, sir—at least, I speak for myself,” said Stewart.

“And I am equally anxious to grant it,” added Hamilton.

“Well, gentlemen, it is, that you will confer a pleasure on Mrs. Shillitoe and self by staying where you are, and using this as if it were a travellers' bungalow in *your* sense of the term.”

"You are very kind, indeed ; but you see we are engaged to the remainder of the party, and it would not do to throw them over," said Stewart.

"Bring 'em all here ; the more the merrier," said the old gentleman, heartily.

Here the lady added her entreaties ; and it was finally arranged that Benyon, who volunteered his services in the matter, should ride on to the travellers' bungalow, and invite the remainder of the party in the name of Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe, of Stanbuscook-cam Lodge, Peckham Rye.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING could now exceed the civility and friendliness of the eccentric old couple.

"Dear, dear !" said old Mr. Shillitoe, as he leaned back in his chair, "to think now that ten minutes ago we were ready to snap each other's noses off ! I don't think I ever got into such a rage in my life." And here the fat old gentleman, for about the tenth time, became overcome by the recollection of his recent behaviour.

"Now, I daresay, gentlemen, you are both wondering what Mrs. Shillitoe and I can be doing here ?"

He was quite right. His two visitors *were* wondering very much indeed on the subject ; but they merely bowed and smiled, as much as to say, "Tell us, if you'd like to, and don't, if you'd rather not."

"I think, Arabella, taking the circumstances of the morning

into consideration, that we might give these two gentlemen those reasons which have induced us to exchange the familiar comforts of Stanbuscookcam Lodge for the novel surroundings of a bungalow in the gorgeous East."

"Certainly, my love. They are gentlemen who have evidently moved in the politest circles, and are worthy of our confidence. They will also, I am sure appreciate our motives," said Mrs. Shillitoe, with a right royal graciousness, in keeping with the grandeur of the turban head-dress.

"Yes, gentlemen, after challenging you both to fight—oh dear, oh dear!—I will not look upon you as strangers. I like you, I like you both. I know it is not what is called *haut ton* to speak one's mind out like this. But I spoke it out when I was not very partial to you, and it is only fair I should be equally outspoken when my sentiments have undergone a complete change. Yes, gentlemen, I have conceived a liking, a great liking, for you. Give me your hands once more."

After the impulsive old gentleman had "pump-handled" his two visitors for a minute apiece, he proceeded to unburthen his bosom.

"I must tell you that up to three or four months ago Arabella—ahem!—Mrs. Shillitoe and I could not claim what we now undoubtedly possess—the right to be called travellers. Beyond occasional visits to Ramsgate and Margate, and voyages to Boulogne and back, we had done but little in the travelling line. Suddenly, however, and somewhat disagreeably, I may say, our eyes became opened to the advantages of travel, and in this manner. After retiring, many years ago, from business in the City, Mrs. Shillitoe and myself settled down in a comfortable residence situated in the salubrious and convenient suburban locality known by the name of Peckham Rye. Fond of social intercourse, delighting in the exercise of hospitality, and possessing ample means of gratifying this last taste to the top of our bent.

it was not long before we gathered round ourselves an—an—ad— well, I should hardly like to say——”

“Admiring?” suggested Stewart.

“Well, well,” said Mr. Shillitoe, very pleased, “coming from you I may use the term—an admiring circle of acquaintances. Of that circle Mrs. Shillitoe and myself formed the centre, and that position we occupied with, I believe, ability and *aff*-ability for a long term of years. We were the recognized heads of our circle. Whenever we attended local dinner-parties, the host took Mrs. Shillitoe in to dinner, while I conducted the lady of the house to her seat at the festive board. Forming, as I may term it, a couple of units in the social circumference of our circle, were Mr. and Mrs. Tompkins.”

Here Mr. Shillitoe's face became overcast, and Mrs. Shillitoe gave a toss of her head that nearly shot the turban off.

“These Tompkinses,” resumed the gentleman, not without some emotion, “were nice enough people in *their* way, I dare say, but in *our* way they were unbearable. Such a thing as their ever aspiring to take the lead in that circle of which Mrs. Shillitoe and myself formed the—well, *you* suggested the word—the admired centre, was beyond their wildest dreams. But, suddenly, this Mr. and Mrs. Tompkins take it into their heads to visit Egypt, there to ‘do’ the Nile and the Pyramids. And away they start. In due course of time they return to their suburban home, completely changed beings. They became the lions of our *coterie*. They must have swallowed the Nile. The continuous outpouring of that river that flowed from their lips led one to believe so. Its cataracts and its crocodiles became, to *us*, at least, positively loathsome, for we saw how its muddy waters were sapping and undermining the banks on which our social eminence rested. It was Nile, Nile, Nile perpetually with those Tompkinses, and on the bosom of that abominable river they rose above the heads of Arabella and myself. Yes, we were completely swamped by

the Nile. So much did Tompkins talk about the Nile that I verily believe sometimes after dinner he fancied that it was he and not Nelson who had commanded at the battle of that name. Hitherto, at popular readings and local meetings I had always occupied the chair; but now it was 'Mr. Tompkins, the great traveller,' 'Mr. Tompkins, of Nile celebrity,' 'Mr. Tompkins, the scaler of Pyramids, the decipherer of hieroglyphics,' who, amidst deafening acclamations, was always unanimously voted into that position. But this was not all. The climax of that social fatuity which turned the heads of the Tompkinses was reached about four months ago——"

"On the evening of the thirty-first of October, 1876, at twenty-five minutes to eight by the Simcox's drawing-room clock," said Mrs. Shillitoe in sepulchral tones, fully indicating the enormity of the wrong which had been done her at that precise moment, and which still rankled in her capacious bosom.

"Exactly so. At that hour, dinner just having been announced, Mr. Simcox, the host of a large and influential assembly of guests, gave his arm to Mrs. Tompkins, for was not Mrs. Tompkins a great celebrity, who with her own hand had inscribed her name on the Pyramids of Egypt! Yes, was not the name of Euphonisba Tompkins to be found amidst the hieroglyphics of the Ptolemies? and to whom else in that room but the owner of that exalted name, could Mr. Simcox, the host, give his arm? while the obscure Mrs. Shillitoe was forgotten altogether, and finally was taken in by Mr. Simcox's junior clerk, who had been asked at the last moment, as a stop gap."

Here the old gentleman paused and breathed hard, while Mrs. Shillitoe tapped her foot on the floor of the verandah, like a woodpecker in a rage. With difficulty Stewart and Hamilton kept their countenances, but seeing how deep were the feelings of their host and hostess, they strove to look sympathetic and also inexpressibly shocked.

"That night, gentlemen," went on Mr. Shillitoe, in slow and impressive tones, "we made up our minds. We saw there was nothing for us to do but to travel. The Tompkinses had been to Egypt. We resolved to go to India and 'do' Egypt, and the Tompkinses as well, on the way. From the moment of our decision, the love of travel and the ambition to be considered travellers, became the ruling passion of our existence. In the interval between our determination and our start, a matter of about a month, we read together with avidity and delight, every book of travel we could get hold of. We accompanied Cook round the world; we discovered America with Columbus; with Raleigh, we brought potatoes to England; we enjoyed ourselves uncommonly with Marco Polo; we went through some thrilling adventures with Livingstone and Stanley; and we relished our voyages in search of the North Pole very much indeed; did we not, Arabella, my love?"

"They were charming, charming," acquiesced Mrs. Shillitoe, with all the spirit of a gallant Arctic explorer.

"Under this course of reading, so imbued did we become with admiration and appreciation of illustrious travellers, that in compliment to them, we changed the name of our residence at Peckham Rye. It used to be called 'The Rhododendrons;' we now call it 'Stanbuscookcam Lodge.' Stanbuscookcam may have struck you as rather peculiar. And yet, gentlemen, it is the embodiment of a beautiful idea, and was composed by Mrs. Shillitoe and myself. It was the joint composition of our brains, fired by the study of geographical lore; was it not, love?"

"Yes, Shillitoe, dear," replied the lady with pardonable pride.

"Now can you guess, gentlemen, the proud derivation of that polysyllabic word, 'Stanbuscookcam?'"

Hamilton and Stewart replied that, with only a few moments' consideration, they were completely in the dark.

"Very well; then I shall enlighten you. The names of the explorers, Stanley, Columbus, Cook, and Cameron, are of course as familiar in your mouths as household words? Well, each of those names, famous in the annals of travel, contribute something to the name of my residence. 'Stanbuscookcam,' gentlemen, is a glorious combination of the first syllable in Stanley, the last of Columbus, the entire name of Cook, and the first three letters of Cameron. It was a fine, a beautiful idea, was it not?"

"Yes," said Stewart, with difficulty preserving his gravity. "May I ask if it was a sudden inspiration, as these bright ideas often are?"

"Well, no," said old Mr. Shillitoe, in much the same tones as Newton might have used when speaking about his Binomial Theorem. "Well, no, it was not. It was rather the gradual outcome and development of our joint communings and discussions on the subject. But on our return, gentlemen, there will be a slight—I say it advisedly—a slight addition to the name. We mean to change it to 'Stantoebuscookcam Lodge.' I daresay now you can divine whence the additional syllable is obtained," concluded Mr. Shillitoe, as he cocked his head on one side with a pleasantly expectant air.

"From Shillitoe, I presume, that name by then being entitled to a place in the famous roll of travellers," said Stewart.

"Just so," said Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe at exactly the same moment, and in exactly the same tones of pride.

"Yes," went on the old gentleman, "you are quite right. I do not mean to say that of that illustrious combination of syllables, ours will be by any means one of the principal. On the contrary, it will be the least, the very least. It will be the lowest of all, the toe, not even the big toe, but the little toe of the collection. We shall speedily return to 'Stantoebuscookcam Lodge,' and the Tompkinses may rate and prate, and gabble and jabber as much as ever they like about the Nile. It will not do us any harm. We

have not only done the Nile; we have done the Tompkinses. We have capped them with India. Even on their own vantage ground Egypt, we have beaten them. On the principal Pyramid, the name of Arabella Shillitoe stands above, above, gentlemen, by fully two inches, the name of Euphonisba Tompkins. With her own hand she inscribed it. The exertion was fearful, but she was equal to it. She spoiled the Egyptian on whose back she stood for the purpose—very much spoiled him indeed; I fear he has contracted curvature of the spine for life; but, what matter? I have paid him liberally, and the name of Shillitoe is emblazoned on the most ancient of monuments, above that of Tompkins. But we did not rest on our laurels at that point. Gentlemen, we shall utterly choke up the Tompkinses' Nile with our India. We shall on our return, resume our positions as leaders of that Peckham Rye *coterie* which we may be said to have established."

"But," said Stewart, in a spirit of heartless mischief, "suppose the Tompkinses were themselves to make a tour to India."

The triumphant air vanished from Mr. Shillitoe, and his brow grew black as night. Mrs. Shillitoe, too, visibly changed colour.

"In that case," said Mr. Shillitoe, after a pause, his face brightening up, "we should have to go to China."

"Most decidedly so," acquiesced the lady in tones of spirited determination.

"But they might do the same," said Stewart.

Again Mr. Shillitoe's face fell, but again it brightened up as he murmured, "Japan."

"But they might follow you there."

"Then, sir," said Mr. Shillitoe testily, "Mrs. Shillitoe and myself would have to undertake a voyage round the world, that's all."

"But, excuse me, my dear sir, it might not be all; they can do the same," remarked that arch tormentor, Stewart.

"Well, sir, in that case," said Mr. Shillitoe with desperation,

"I don't see that there would be any course open to me but to let Stantoebuscookcam Lodge on an indefinite lease, and constitute myself a married version of the Wandering Jew, and never stop travelling at all."

"We might try the North Pole first, dear," said Mrs. Shillitoe, with a "do or die" glare in her eyes.

"Certainly, my dear. But come, gentlemen," said Mr. Shillitoe, his face, which had been lowering and overcast for the last few moments, now breaking out once more into smiles, "these misgivings are groundless, and I see you have raised them in my breast merely in a spirit of good-natured badinage. No, no, India will be enough for the Tompkinses. They won't beat that. You will perhaps now understand, after this long and confidential explanation, why Mrs. Shillitoe and myself, after all our trouble, expense, anxiety, and exertion, were so peculiarly sensitive concerning our claims to be considered in the light of travellers. Bless me, gentlemen, you could not have said anything in this world more annoying than to doubt those claims."

"Yes, we perfectly see it all now," said Stewart, who was the spokesman of the two, Hamilton being fully occupied in keeping his risible muscles under proper control. "But surely you cannot have penetrated to the very centre of the Mysore territory, where we now have the pleasure of meeting you, without having used these travellers' bungalows on the way. How is it possible, then, sir, that you can have remained ignorant of the term, and of the rules on which these establishments are conducted?"

Mr. Shillitoe pondered for a few moments, with a thoughtful cast of countenance, and then gave vent to a long, low whistle.

"Yes, Shillitoe," said the lady, "the same thing occurs to me. Yes, you may whistle for your five hundred pounds, that's my opinion."

"Yes, my dear, a fearful suspicion flashes through my brain,

that Sir Plantagenet de Montmorency was not quite what he represented himself to be."

At the mention of the aristocratic name, significant looks passed between Stewart and Hamilton; but they held their peace.

"The facts are these, gentlemen," said poor old Mr. Shillitoe, rather crestfallen: "We picked up a most charming fellow-passenger at Alexandria. His name was Sir Plantagenet de Montmorency. He paid the greatest attention to Mrs. Shillitoe and myself, and bearing what I may term the noble stamp of travel upon him, he speedily ingratiated himself into our favours—I may almost say affections. On our arrival in India he offered to take us under his wing. We looked upon it then as an eagle's wing, and accepted the offer with pleasure. I fear the wing of a kite would be nearer the mark. He suggested we should visit the Cauvery Falls. 'Did they beat the Cataracts of the Nile?' asked we. 'Certainly,' was the reply. 'Take us there,' said we. For a portion of the way we travelled by rail, the remainder by *dak*,* as you call it. He was a man of immense wealth and unbounded hospitality. He was very fond of visiting the Cauvery Falls, and still fonder, he said, of taking his friends there. So much so, that he had built and maintained, at his own expense, bungalows all along the road for his and their accommodation."

Here Stewart and Hamilton could not altogether restrain a laugh.

"Yes, gentlemen," said poor old Mr. Shillitoe, very crestfallen, "I feel I deserve to be laughed at."

"Not at all, not at all. We beg your pardon."

"No, don't do that, please; I deserve it; and I am much obliged to you for indulging in your laugh in so subdued and delicate a manner. In England I should not have been so credulous; but

* A native contract journey, in former days performed in *palanquins* by native bearers; now in a species of cart, drawn by relays of bullocks.

we had heard so much of Indian hospitality and Indian munificence, that Arabella and I were prepared to swallow anything in that way that we came across. You will thus see why we knew nothing whatever about travellers' bungalows. We took them all for Sir Plantagenet de Montmorency's. Well, we arrived at the Cauvery Falls, and we liked the look of the place about here so much, that I bought this bungalow from a coffee-planter, I believe he was, who had made his fortune, and was going home. You see, Mrs. Shillitoe and I are, not to put too fine a point upon it, rather of full habits of body——"

"Inclined to *embonpoint*, Shillitoe, is a much more refined way of putting it," interrupted the lady, with some dignity.

"Very well, my dear; anything to oblige a lady. We are rather *embonpoint*, and travelling in India 's uncommon hot work——"

"Oppressive, Shillitoe, oppressive," again interrupted the lady.

"Well, oppressive. So precious oppressive, that I used to think sometimes that there'd be a couple of pops, and an end to Arabella and me; and so we determined to stay here quietly for a month or so, and go home again. You see, our object was merely to go to India. That will be quite sufficient to wipe Tompkins' eye—the eye with the Nile cataract in it. Sir Plantagenet de Montmorency stayed with us here some little time, until he received a pressing invitation from the Governor-General, who most anxiously wished to consult him upon some State matter. I saw the letter, and it was couched in the most friendly terms, and commenced with 'Dear Monty.' I will confess I was impressed. In this sudden emergency, Sir Plantagenet was good enough to borrow five hundred pounds from me, and I, having every faith in the solvency of a man who could keep about twenty bungalows just for the travelling uses of his friends, and was addressed as 'Dear Monty' by the Governor-General, let him have the money with the greatest pleasure. So grateful was I for the attention he had

paid Arabella and myself, that the tears of joy stood in my eyes at being able to render him this small service."

"I don't wish to croak like a bird of ill omen, or to backbite," said Stewart, "but I think the chances of your seeing that five hundred pounds again are somewhat remote."

"I fear so; I fear so. Those bungalows, I see now, are no more his than they are mine, and he is evidently an impostor of the deepest dye."

"Yes, he is a well-known swindler, and the high-sounding name by which you knew him, is no more his than the travelling bungalows are. He has about half a dozen *aliases*, and about three weeks ago was 'run in' at Bangalore, by a detective from London, where they say he is 'wanted' badly."

"Never mind. It's no use crying over spilt milk. The five hundred will neither break nor make me. It's neither here nor there. Let it go, and dull care go along with it." And here the philosophic old Mr. Shillitoe resumed his jovial cast of countenance.

At this point there entered the sleek and elderly native servant, who, the reader may remember, had last made his exit from the scene under a heavy fire of mangoes hurled at him by the enraged Mr. Shillitoe.

"Ramchullundur Samingo," said Mr. Shillitoe, in tones at once pompous and affable, and waving his hand as if to imply, "there's a name and a half for you!"

"*Sahib.*"

"I take an early opportunity of tendering my apologies to you for having, in a moment of irritation, arising from a misconception of circumstances, subjected you to the indignity, and possible personal discomfort, of receiving a smartly-delivered mango on the back of the head, and another on the nose. Accept, Ramchullundur Samingo, this gold mohur, value one pound nine and twopence halfpenny, in the light of an indemnity."

Ramchullundur Samingo *salaamed* low and gratefully as he took the proffered coin. I am sorry to say that the native servants in India are too accustomed to missiles—not always as harmless as mangoes—from the hands of their European masters, to expect compensation for every act of the kind.

“Ramchullundur Samingo.”

It was with the keenest relish that Mr. Shillitoe rolled out this long name, and he always paused after its delivery, to let it fall on the surrounding ears with effect.

“*Sahib.*”

“These *sahibs*, Ramchullundur Samingo, are my guests. Cherish them, Ramchullundur Samingo, as if they were nutmegs of delight, pomegranates of sweetness, and as the cinnamon trees which grow upon, and shed their fragrance over the graves of your ancestors.”

“Yes, *sahib.*”

“Refuse them nothing, Ramchullundur Samingo. If they ask for the head of your master, remove it, and lay it as an offering at their feet.”

“Yes, *sahib*,” said the servant, with true Indian imperturbability.

“That will do, Ramchullundur Samingo.”

The attendant withdrew *salaaming*, while Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe both looked at their guests with pleased, not to say proud expressions, which plainly meant, “What do you think of *that* performance?”

“This is the queerist old fish I ever met.”

“A more eccentric or amusing old couple I never came across.”

Such were the mental reflections of Hamilton and Stewart respectively. But they said nothing. Their lips were rigidly closed. Had they opened them for a moment, roars of laughter would have burst forth. Even Stewart's equanimity had broken

down under Ramchullundur Samingo and his master's grandiloquent injunction to him.

"I always speak to them in their own flowery style when I wish to be impressive," said Mr. Shillitoe, in a high state of self-admiration. "Now you have been a long time in India, Mr. Stewart, have you not, sir?"

"Yes," said Stewart, gulping down the laugh which very nearly made its escape, "yes, very many years."

"Quite so. And yet I'll be bound you never heard the name of Ramchullundur Samingo before?"

"No, never. And it certainly excited my astonishment when I first heard you mention it."

"That is only natural. The reason—Arabella, the laurel should rest on your brow as well as on mine. Tell these gentlemen, my love, why, notwithstanding their long sojourn in this land, it is only natural that they should not have heard the name, 'Ramchullundur Samingo' before."

"Well—but my dear Shillitoe," said the lady simpering, "it is so like blowing one's own trumpet."

"Never mind. Blow it. Arabella, your lord and master, to whom you owe obedience, commands you to blow your own trumpet, and mine too."

"Well—the fact is, gentlemen, *we* composed it together."

At this announcement, old Mr. Shillitoe's countenance wore a self-complacent expression, as if the muses were actually depositing a laurel wreath on his bald head.

"I will not say," he remarked, "that, as a specimen of joint composition, it comes up to Stanbuscookcam. But still it rolls off the tongue with a freeness and a fulness of sound which is very effective. You see, when first we came to India, a few weeks ago, I used to call them all 'Ram Sammies;' but, after a bit, a bright thought occurred to us, that we should take the head fellow home with us as a brilliant demonstration against the Tompkinses. Then

it struck us that, under those circumstances, 'Ram Sammy' would be hardly dignified enough. So we put our heads together, and 'Ramchullundur Samingo' was the result. Cannot you fancy? No, I think I must put it the other way; you *cannot* fancy the sensation he will create, standing behind my chair in his picturesque attire at a dinner-party at Stantoebuscookcam Lodge, at which the Tompkinses shall be present. What rapt admiration will be on the faces of the guests—except the Tompkinses—as I carelessly remark, 'Ramchullundur Samingo, pass the bottle, I am dry!' 'Ramchullundur Samingo, brush away the blue-tailed fly!'

"But there are no such things in England, Shillitoe, my dear," said the lady.

"Arabella, do *not* raise absurd difficulties. I shall import a blue-tailed fly for the occasion, if necessary. I have surmounted greater obstacles in my life."

At this moment a cavalcade was descried approaching in the distance amidst a cloud of dust.

"Here come the party, Mr. Shillitoe," said Stewart. "Your hospitable message has resulted in what will be, I fear, rather an overwhelming invasion."

"Not a bit of it," said Mr. Shillitoe, surveying the approaching horsemen with delight. "As I said before, the more the merrier. Here, Ramchullundur Samingo!"

The sleek old native obeyed the summons with wonderful alacrity.

"Ramchullundur Samingo, yonder, with the swiftness of the bamboo and tamarind leaves careering before the fierce monsoon come the pale-faced *sahibs* from over the black waters. Let them be cared for as though they were ten times more precious in your eyes than the rubies and the diamonds which festooned the turban of your esteemed forefather, the Great Mogul. Let the nectar fit for the *houris*, that is called champagne, sparkle at their approach like the stars——"

"Oh, bother, Shillitoe ! There's no time to lose."

"Ah ! true. Be off, Ram Sammy. Any amount to eat and drink, and look sharp about it !"

CHAPTER III.

RIGHT royally did Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe entertain their guests. At twelve o'clock there was a champagne tiffin, at which Mrs. Shillitoe appeared attired in a satin gown and a gorgeous turban with a feather, while Mr. Shillitoe was resplendent in a white waistcoat and trowsers, swallow-tailed coat and pumps.

During the meal, the plan of operations to be followed in the ensuing trip to the Falls was discussed.

"The Rajah of Mysore," said one of the party, a gentleman holding a high political appointment at the court of that ruler, "has kindly placed some of his elephants at our disposal for the journey. They are to be sent to the travellers' bungalow later in the day, and I have left word that they are to be brought on here."

This piece of information was received with satisfaction by most of the party, to many of whom elephant-riding would be a novelty. On Stewart, however, the announcement seemed to have quite a contrary effect. A look almost of pain flitted across his face as he murmured, "*I* shall most certainly not avail myself of his Highness's courtesy." The remark was not heard, and Stewart speedily shook off, at least to all appearances, the gloomy fit which had so suddenly seized him.

"Yes," continued the gentleman who had broached the subject, "a bungalow close to the Falls has been prepared for our reception, where we shall dine, and pass the night. I think," he went on, looking round him and then at Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe, "I

think—in fact, I am sure—I am only speaking the wishes of our party, when I express a hope that our kind host and hostess will join our little expedition.”

The invitation was heartily endorsed by all the party—a compliment Mrs. Shillitoe acknowledged by bowing on both sides so graciously, that the two gentlemen between whom she sat had their noses tickled by her feather until they sneezed again.

“You do indeed honour us, gentlemen,” said Mr. Shillitoe, looking as pleased as Punch. “Arabella, my love, what do you say?”

“That I should like extremely to go, Shillitoe, dear.”

“Very well, then, gentlemen, on behalf of my wife and myself, I beg to accept, with the greatest pleasure, your very kind invitation.”

After this, Mr. Shillitoe became so elated that he was obliged to give vent to his feelings in speechifying.

“Ramchullundur Samingo, fill the gentlemen’s glasses for a toast.”

This preliminary having been concluded, Mr. Shillitoe proposed the health of the Rajah of Mysore. Then having got on this tack, there was no stopping him. He proposed the health of the Queen, of the Viceroy, and, finally, in an uncontrollable burst of hospitality, he proposed the health of all his guests.

Upon this Stewart’s friends called upon that gentleman to return thanks for them, and also to propose the health of Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe, a duty which Stewart performed with great satisfaction to his brother guests, and still greater satisfaction to his host and hostess. Of course the toast was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm, and Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe bowed their acknowledgments. So low, indeed, did Mrs. Shillitoe bow, that the tip of the feather descended into a highly-seasoned curry, which Ramchullundur Samingo was on the point of handing to her. In blissful ignorance of the fact, however, Mrs. Shillitoe continued to

beam with smiles, while the feather drooped more gracefully than ever under its new decoration.

After tiffin was over, there was a general adjournment to the verandah, there to discuss coffee and cigars.

"Shillitoe, dear," said Mrs. Shillitoe, seizing the opportunity of a few moments' private conversation, and going up to her spouse with a beaming countenance, "what *would* the Tompkinses say if they could only see us riding on elephants belonging to his Royal Highness the Rajah of Mysore?"

"What indeed, my love!" said Mr. Shillitoe, gazing with triumph and affection on the partner of his joys. "With what pleasure we will recall this day, as we sit in sweet and peaceful companionship by our own fireside at Stantoebuscookcam Lodge, my love——"

The endearing epithet suddenly changed into a cry of anguish.

"Take that abominable feather out of your head!" roared Mr. Shillitoe, as he snatched the prized appendage, and cast it to the winds.

Mrs. Shillitoe stood in speechless wrath, and tossed her head in such violent indignation that the turban nearly went after the feather.

"Oh, my eye!" ejaculated Mr. Shillitoe, and this remark must on no account be confounded with the slang expression of the same words.

"Mr. Shillitoe, are you mad?" said Mrs. Shillitoe in scathing tones. "How dare you? What do you mean by this outrage in the presence of strangers?"

Mr. Shillitoe did not reply, but merely glared at her with fury in one eye and curry in the other.

"Dear me, what *is* the matter?" said Stewart, as he and the remainder of the guests crowded around Mr. Shillitoe, for that gentleman's behaviour created considerable astonishment and apprehension in the minds of his beholders. He held both

hands to one eye, and swayed his body backwards and forwards while simultaneously he stamped his pumps on the floor as if he were doing his best—and with every chance of success—to bring the bungalow down about his ears and those of his guests.

Reader, let us draw a veil over the "pain and anguish" which, for the next five minutes, "wrung the brow" of Mr. Shillitoe, and of which Mrs. Shillitoe had been the "ministering angel," though hardly in Sir Walter Scott's sense. Suffice it to say that at the expiration of about that time, the storm was over, and the worthy and eccentric old couple were once more in their normal condition of good nature and kindness to one another.

"I was hasty, Arabella, my love; I admit it. I beg your pardon; you shall have another and a longer feather; you shall; I insist," said Mr. Shillitoe.

"Don't mention it, Shillitoe, dear."

"But I shall. You shall have the biggest feather that has ever adorned the female head, even if I myself have to scour the plains of Timbuctoo in search of the longest-tailed ostrich under the sun. I was hasty, abominably hasty."

"No, no, Shillitoe, dear, you were not hasty. The act was warranted by the provocation," said Mrs. Shillitoe with noble magnanimity, and there the matter dropped.

But if you think, reader, that Mr. Shillitoe *was* hasty, and showed a deplorable want of patience, under the circumstances, the best thing you can do is to put yourself in his place. Insert with a feather a small portion of highly seasoned curry into your eye, and if you are then able, with a quiet, unruffled demeanour, and in tones of calm deliberation, to say a few well-chosen words on the beauty of patience under trying circumstances, you will be a wonderful boy; and I've no doubt the editor of "Every Boy's Magazine, who does so much for boys, will be inclined to reward your manly fortitude according to its very high merits.

* * * * *

The extreme heat of the day was over, and the sun was getting low in the heavens, when, with heavy, ponderous tread, the Rajah's elephants, under the guidance of their *mahouts*, entered the compound of Mr. Shillitoe's bungalow. The huge monsters were gaily caparisoned; their clothing was of scarlet cloth, richly embroidered with gold, and the *howdahs* * were also highly ornamented. Just in front of the *howdah*, and sitting on the neck of each animal, was the *mahout*, who, by means of his voice, assisted by a little emphasizing with an instrument like a diminutive boat-hook, controlled and guided the movements of the unwieldy-looking brutes.

The party being quite prepared for a start, no time was lost in mounting the monsters. There are several ways of accomplishing this feat. The commonest method, I think, is for the elephant to kneel down; then, by means of a short ladder placed against his massive sides, you are able to step into the *howdah*. Sometimes a well-trained elephant will enable you to dispense altogether with the services of a ladder. He will very obligingly crook one of his fore feet up to form a species of step—in fact, give you a “leg up;” and then, by laying hold of one of his great ears, you can, if you are tolerably active, climb into the *howdah*. On this occasion some of the party adopted the latter method; but Mrs. Shillitoe was, of course, accommodated with a ladder, and even then there was, to quote the words of a very old popular ditty, “Such a getting upstairs I never did see.” First the ladder slipped, and Mrs. Shillitoe shrieked; then she trod on her gown, and had to be liberated by brute force. Altogether, getting her into position on the elephant's back was a work of considerable difficulty. It was piling Ossa upon Pelion. Beyond a grunt, however, and a flap of his ears, Pelion bore the burden laid upon him with his usual equanimity.

* Receptacle for the riders.

Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe were the first two to mount on separate elephants, and as the two animals were side by side, Mrs. Shillitoe was enabled to remark confidentially—

“Oh, Shillitoe, dear, what a pity we could not be photographed like this as a *memento* of this day. If you recollect, the Tompkinses were photographed on camels.”

“Yes, it is a pity, my dear,” said Mr. Shillitoe, “a very great pity; and yet I do not know. Shakespeare very truly says, ‘Honour will not live with the living: detraction will not suffer it.’ If we *were* photographed in this position, the envy of the Tompkinses would probably lead them to circulate the report that the photograph had been taken at the Zoological Gardens, Regent’s Park.”

“I daresay. I shouldn’t wonder. Dear, dear!” And here Mrs. Shillitoe heaved a deep sigh over frail humanity.

By this time all the party were mounted but Stewart, who stood surveying them at some little distance with not the cheeriest face in the world.

“Hallo, Stewart!” called out Hamilton, “come along, old fellow.”

“No, thanks,” said Stewart, with a serious air.

“I’ve never ridden on an elephant before,” cried out a young subaltern. “It’s jolly. *Do* come along.”

“No, thank you. I *have*, lots of times in Central India. But I don’t care about doing so again. I shall ride to the Falls on horseback, and meet you all there later on in the afternoon.”

“How extraordinarily unsociable!” was the general verdict, expressed in different ways. But Stewart’s decision was evidently not the result of a mere whim to be “pooh-poohed,” and he withstood all their endeavours to induce him to accompany them on the elephants.

“Why, Stewart, old fellow,” said Hamilton, leaning over his

howdah, "you seem as if you positively shuddered at the sight of an elephant."

"Well, perhaps I do, my dear Hamilton ; and perhaps you would, too, if you stood in my shoes, with my experiences in your mind."

"Ah, thereby hangs a tale evidently. Will you promise to give it to us to-night, if we don't bother you any more ?"

"Well, I've not been in the habit of spinning the yarn, but if you like to hear it, and go off quietly without asking any more questions, I'll tell it to you this evening."

"Agreed !" was pronounced on all sides, and the elephants *

* I here take the opportunity of relating one or two short anecdotes illustrating the sagacity—mounting on occasion to reason—which these animals possess, and, when trained, employ in the service of man. An old officer who served nearly thirty years in India, tells me that while returning from the Afghan campaign, a field gun one day stuck hard and fast in a nullah. The wheels had not only sunk deep into the soil, but a portion of a large fallen tree had in some way got jammed between them. Every effort on the part of man and horse was unavailing, and at last it was determined to employ the services of three pad elephants, so called from their being provided with pads on their heads to protect them when shoving against great weights. On arriving at the scene the *mahouts* showed the animals, by shouts and gestures, what was required of them, and then left them entirely to their own devices. Placing their padded heads against the gun and carriage, they pushed : but even this vast combination of strength was expended in vain. One effort was enough to convince them that other measures must be adopted. Calmly and attentively they walked round the gun, minutely surveying its position, and then the three of them laid hold of the fallen tree with their trunks, and, with a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together, they drew it from between the wheels, and a simultaneous push from behind now liberated the gun. The same officer had often seen three or four elephants employed in rolling a felled tree of enormous size. They would place a foot each against the tree, and on the leading elephant trumpeting out a given signal, they would push all together, and roll the tree two or three feet. Then, closing up to it, they would again go through the same performance, which they would repeat over and over again, until they had moved the tree the required distance. While lying on his *charpoy* (a low tent bed) during the heat of the day, this same officer would often see, with the greatest interest, an elephant of his performing, with the greatest attention and care, the duties of a nurse. While away at the *bazaar*, on business or pleasure, the *mahout* and his wife would leave their two infants

moved on with their living freights, while Stewart turned away to have another quiet cheroot in the verandah, before following on horseback.

CHAPTER IV.

It is not only for its Falls that the Grand River Cauvery is famous. The town and fortress of Seringapatam, a name for ever memorable in the annals of British achievements, is built on its banks; and its waters, on a certain glorious day in the spring of the year 1799, blushed deep with the blood of Britain's sons, as they crossed its rocky shallows, under a heavy fire of canon, musketry, and gingalls. But this blood was not expended in vain. The gallant assailants carried all before them, and Tippoo Sahib, the powerful and dreaded ruler of Mysore, was himself amongst the slain. With the fall of Seringapatam, and death of Tippoo, the whole of the extensive and rich state of Mysore passed into the possession of the East India Company. Had Tippoo taken the advice of a French officer of distinction, in his service, and retired to the more easily defended hill country, there to follow out the tactics of his father, Hyder Ali,* he would in all proba-

in his charge for hours together. They would simply place the dusky little things at his feet and leave them there, to crawl or squall as they liked. During this time, not a creature would the elephant allow to approach his small charges, and whenever one of the little crawlers was getting out of his reach, he would just lay hold of it with his trunk, and deposit it at his feet again. These animals, however, are not always thus tender and gentle. We may possibly hear something of the other side of their nature from Stewart, when he tells his yarn in the evening.

* The plan Hyder Ali, with consummate generalship, adopted, was to wear out the British troops by constant marching. All efforts of the British commander to force an engagement were futile; and when, enraged with his failures to close with his enemy, he taunted Hyder Ali with cowardice, that astute

bility have saved his own life and prolonged the independence of Mysore for a considerable period. But he was led away by his *fakers*, or soothsayers, who assured him that the river Cauvery would suddenly rise, and sweep away the infidels on its foaming bosom. The Cauvery, however, did nothing of the sort, but continued to meander along its rocky bed in a shallow insignificant stream, as is its custom in the month of May—the month of the final capture. It is only fair to the Cauvery to add that on a former occasion it had been a better friend to the country through which it flowed. In 1791, while Seringapatam was being invested by Lord Cornwallis, it suddenly rose, and obliged that commander to raise the siege. But there was nothing in this which could appear, even to the native mind, as supernatural. The General had chosen his time badly—during the rainy season.

This Tippoo Sahib, with whom the name of Seringapatam is so closely woven, was a monster of cruelty, inflamed with the most dire hatred towards the British, though, in candour, I must add that I cannot see any particular reason why he should have loved them. By the Treaty of 1792 with Lord Cornwallis, his father had been shorn of half his dominion at the point of the British bayonet. The British officers and soldiers who fell into his hands he treated with the most barbarous indignities and cruelty. When his capital was captured, many of these were discovered in the vilest dungeons, where they had been incarcerated for years. In his palace a curious mechanical toy was found, with which Tippoo

Indian chieftain calmly replied, " Give me the sort of troops you command, and your wish for battle shall be gratified. You will understand my mode of warfare in time. Shall I risk my cavalry, which cost me one thousand rupees each, against your cannon balls, which did not cost you two pice (just one farthing)? No; I will march your troops till their legs shall become the size of their bodies. You shall not have a blade of grass or a drop of water. I shall hear of you every time your drums beat, but you shall not know where I am once a month. I will give your army battle, but it shall be when I please—not when you desire it."

had been wont to amuse himself in his leisure moments. It consisted of two life-sized figures—a tiger and an European—the latter prostrate and under the paws of the former. On turning a handle like that of a barrel-organ, the tiger growled and the man moaned. I believe this savage plaything is still preserved in the East Indian Museum, London. It was not only automaton tigers to which this monster of cruelty was addicted. Numerous pet-tigers from the jungle were found in his palace, so many, in fact, that it was necessary to employ a large firing-party of the 33rd regiment to destroy them. He even used the animals as custodians and executioners. A large tiger was found chained near the door of his treasury, and any servant displeasing him was thrown to one of these ferocious brutes, to be torn and devoured. Tippoo's fondness for these animals must be sought for in the similarity of their natures. His name, indeed, meant "tiger," and a tiger he was in nature as well as in name. The imperial crest of his father had been an elephant, but he altered it to a tiger, and his soldiers, whom it was his custom, on the eve of battle, to infuriate with bang and opium, he called "tigers of war." So great was his love of shedding blood that during the siege and attack, instead of performing the duties of a general, he preferred those of a sharp-shooter, and would amuse himself in "picking off" our men with muskets loaded and handed to him by his attendants. With all his revolting faults, however, Tippoo Sahib possessed one good quality—that of personal bravery. He died sword in hand, fighting furiously, and his dead body was found amidst a heap of slain, and pierced with four wounds. The description of the treasure found in his palace reminds one of the "Arabian Nights." The jewels in the harem alone were estimated to be worth one million sterling. The throne was covered with plates of gold and silver, studded with precious jewels. It fell into the possession of a general of engineers, who afterwards obtained for the gold and silver alone £25,000. A private soldier

picked up and sold for a mere trifle to a medical officer, two pairs of bracelets, set with diamonds, the least precious of which was afterwards valued, at Hyderabad, at £30,000 sterling. As to the other one, it was beyond the jeweller's powers of estimation. By the way, the soldier who picked up these treasures was a Scotchman, of a Highland regiment, but he does not appear to have been as canny as the general run of his countrymen. The canopy over the throne was thickly studded with jewels, and the fringes round it were composed entirely of costly pearls. Over it was a large gold bird, with a long tail. Its beak was an enormous emerald, its eyes carbuncles, its back was thickly studded with precious stones, and its breast and tail were completely covered with diamonds. A noteworthy feature in the capture of Seringapatam is that the Duke of Wellington took a prominent share in it, as Colonel Wellesley, commanding the 33rd Regiment. He was its first British governor, and was appointed to that post the day after the capture, by his brother, the Marquis of Wellesley, then Governor-General of India.

All the above facts connected with Seringapatam and the river Cauvery, were related to Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe by their new friends, as they journeyed to the Falls. The worthy couple were keenly interested. When Mr. Shillitoe heard of Tippoo's atrocities, the British blood boiled in his veins, while that of Mrs. Shillitoe ran cold, she said. But nothing raised Mrs. Shillitoe's interest to so high a pitch as the description of the precious bird of jewels and gold, on the canopy of the tyrant's throne. When she heard of its emerald beak, its carbuncle eyes, and its diamond tail, she clasped her hands, turned her eyes up, and murmured softly to herself, "What—oh, what—would I give to have a bird like that surmounting my turban!"

The short journey on the elephants was accomplished with pleasure and ease. The homely old couple were treated with the greatest attention. The fact was, they were such deliciously rare

old birds in India, that they were positively refreshing to the exiles from home amongst whom they now found themselves, and when they arrived at their journey's end, they not only expressed their regret that it was not a dozen miles farther, but Mr. Shillitoe, stoutly backed up by Mrs. Shillitoe, announced his serious intention of importing a well-trained elephant into England, and riding him about Peckham Rye, in company with Mrs. Shillitoe.

The spectacle which soon burst upon their gaze, turned loquacity into speechless wonder. The Cauvery presented a grand sight. Swollen by the rains into a mighty stream, it rolled along in a turgid flood, until it came to a point about fifty miles from Seringapatam, where it tumbled over a rocky precipice, in boiling, seething volumes of water, and with a mighty roar, that could be heard for miles around. Then, as if unable to quiet down all at once, after such an uproar, its course for the next half-mile or so was a series of yellow foaming cataracts.

"Doesn't it all put one in mind of Southey's poem, 'How the waters come down at Lodore?'" remarked Stewart, who had shortly before ridden up on horseback. "It runs something like this, as well as I can recollect:—

' Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling,
Here smoking and frothing,
Its tumult and wrath in ;
It hastens along, conflicting strong, '
Now striking and raging,
As if a war waging,
Its caverns and rocks among.' "

CHAPTER V.

THE night was one of those breathless ones, common enough—alas, too common—in the tropics. In the verandah of the bungalow near the Falls, the party, having done ample justice to a good dinner, were thoroughly enjoying, after the fatigues of the day, the *dolce far niente* combined with the calm joys of post-prandial cigars.

Mrs. Shillitoe was, of course, debarred from this last indulgence, and it is only fair to the gentlemen to add that they, one and all, politely offered to forego the grateful fumes altogether out of deference to her; but she declared, as ladies generally do under similar circumstances, that she liked the smell of smoke in the open air; upon which, much relieved in their minds, they all lit up without more ado.

“Nothing like the smoke of a Trichinopoly weed for keeping away the mosquitoes, Mrs. Shillitoe,” remarked Hamilton, as he puffed away at one of those rather rank cigars.

“Indeed,” said Mrs. Shillitoe, who had just given herself a smart box on the ear in her endeavour to catch one of those little pests *in flagrante delicto*. “Indeed, then, I hope, gentlemen, you’ll not apologize any further for smoking in my presence.”

This was the last remark that was made for some time, and it was only in the fitness of things that the lady should have had the last word. In silence the members of the party gave themselves up to the seductive influences of the stilly night, that magic period when “Fond memory brings the light of other days around us.” The roar of the Cauvery Falls, not deafening as when they stood on the foam-washed brink, but softened by distance, fell with a soothing effect on the senses. Now and again a more distant and

a very different roar broke upon the ear with a terrible import. Some of Tippoo Sahib's pets. The jungles about here, scarce trodden by the foot of man, stretch for miles and miles, and afford cover to countless numbers of these scourges of India. Mingling with the crowing of the jungle fowl was the monotonous croaking of the frog, which latter sound at times would suddenly change into a scream, the death-cry of some luckless little croaker as he writhed in the jaws of a snake.*

The silence which reigned over the party was at last broken by Hamilton.

"You haven't forgotten your promise, I hope, Stewart?"

"No, I hadn't, but I was half in hopes *you* had."

"Not a bit of it. Don't you think this is just the time for the yarn?"

Everyone concurring in this view, Stewart was booked.

"Ah, Hamilton," he said, in tones half serious, half jocose, "*Infandum! jubes renovare dolorem*. However, a promise must be kept, and I will at once plunge *in medias res*."

STEWART'S STORY.

The scene was not thirty miles from here; the period about ten years ago; and the two actors—the two principal actors, a young subaltern of the name of Dalrymple and myself. I had known young Dalrymple at home well, our respective families having been country neighbours, and some months previous to the date of the adventure I am about to relate, our intimacy had

* Some recently published statistics show that in India, excluding the two provinces of Mysore and Coorg, which furnished no returns, 21,000 persons and 48,000 head of cattle were destroyed by wild animals and snakes in the year 1876. Of these 21,000 our countrymen furnish an infinitesimally small proportion. Our soldiers enjoy a wonderful immunity from these perils. An old officer who served a quarter of a century in India, and during that time marched with English troops throughout its entire length and breadth, tells me that he does not recollect one single instance of an English soldier dying from the bite of a snake.

been renewed at Mykalore, where his regiment was stationed, and where I held a civil appointment. Besides home ties, a common love of sport knit us in close bonds of friendship, and you may be sure Dalrymple and I had not met many weeks before we started on a shooting expedition, the first of a series of many. While out on one of these expeditions we received information from the natives of an old bull elephant who had been committing great ravages on the young crops. These brutes are most destructive. It is not only what they eat and trample upon that is lost. They have in addition a practice of tearing up the rice with their trunks and tossing it over their backs as if in wanton wastefulness. Receiving glowing accounts of this old rogue's viciousness, we determined to track him up and put a stop to his depredations. Tigers by the score had fallen to my gun, and even in the short time he had been in India, Dalrymple had also shot several; but neither of us had ever tackled an elephant, and it was with the keenest relish that we looked forward to opening up a new description of sport. We had friends with us, and they willingly adapted themselves to our plan, but they were nothing like as keen as Dalrymple and I. From the moment we heard of him from the native *shikaris*, that old bull elephant became the guiding-star of our existence. We tracked him by day, and we dreamed of him at night. A fortnight of vigorous tracking and searching failed to bring us up with the object of our desires, and all the members of the party but Dalrymple and myself became thoroughly disheartened. More and more weary they grew of the incessant labour, until at last they came to the conclusion that the game—*big game* as it was—was not worth the candle, and they seceded altogether. Not so Dalrymple and I. The very difficulties we had encountered inflamed instead of subdued our keenness, and we pushed on together with the native *shikaris*, much to their disgust. There is all the difference in the world between being as they were, sportsmen for pay, and being, as we were,

sportsmen out of sheer love of sport. That solitary bull elephant, ever evading our most strenuous efforts, claimed our undivided attention. The country we were working through was rich in other kinds of game, but we thought of nothing but our old elephant. Even the grand Indian bison, standing eighteen hands at the shoulder, as tempting an object as ever induced a sportsman to pull a trigger, was allowed to pass unheeded within easy range of our rifles. At last even Dalrymple and I began to think we had had enough. Our rations were all but exhausted; the last drop of liquor had been consumed, and our stock of rupees well nigh spent. In this state of affairs the unpleasant conviction began to force itself on our minds, that our companions who had turned back at an earlier stage, and whom we had regarded with much contumely for so doing, had, after all, adopted the wiser course; and the future loomed hideous, with their chaff on our empty-handed return to Mykalore. Neither of us, however, liked to confess his thoughts to the other, and we struggled on. At last, I being the elder, took the initiative.

"Dal," I said, as I got out of my tent hammock one morning at day-break, after having dreamed that I had given our pachydermatous old friend his *quietus*, "I tell you what it is; life is too short and too full of other duties to admit of our wasting any more time in tracking. We have now arrived at the end of our resources and our leave, and I think we may add without being hard upon ourselves, the end of our patience. What do you say?"

"Just what you do," replied Dalrymple. "Let us, however, devote just this one more day, and if unsuccessful we can't help ourselves. We must hoist the homeward-bound pennant, with a sigh, old fellow, and put the ship about."

Great was the rejoicing amongst the *shikaris* on hearing that the *sahibs* had at last come to their senses, and that this was to be the last day of the pursuit.

The mid-day sun was baking us into mummies, and we were wearily struggling through the underwood, which grew so thickly that the ground we trod on was still soft with the rains of the early monsoon, when suddenly a cry from me brought Dalrymple to my side, and with indescribable feelings of suppressed excitement we knelt down together, and minutely examined a spot on the ground which had attracted my attention. Yes, there it was—a *fresh* wet footfall, large as two soup plates! I don't think Robinson Crusoe's emotions on seeing the foot-marks on the sand could have equalled ours, as we gazed on that impression which the ponderous foot had left on the ground. At last we were close up with him! Step by step we could track his course on the tender young grass which the late rainfalls had brought sprouting up, and which at intervals was bruised where his foot had rested.

"This *is* glorious!" said Dalrymple, his eyes sparkling and his face flushed with eagerness, while the same glow of pleasurable excitement set my heart beating at an unusual rate.

The *shikaris*, however, did not share our delight. In the excitement of finding the fresh foot-mark we had forgotten all about them, but we had not pushed on many yards, when I felt myself plucked timidly by the coat, and looking round found the head fellow, who immediately prostrated himself on the ground, and in accents quavering with terror, whined out, "*Sahib*, that old man elephant."

On this there was a general grovelling all round of the *shikaris*, accompanied by a piteous chorus of "*Sahib*, that old man elephant!"

They were all blue with fright. The person who first used the expression, "blue funk," must have got it, I am sure, from the contemplation of a terrified nigger. I am not an advocate for the use of personal violence towards the natives. Putting it on no higher grounds, I believe that in nine cases out of ten it frus-

trates its own object. But on this occasion a departure from my usual custom was imperative. We could not dispense with their services, and as they were too frightened to listen to the voice of reason, there was nothing for it but to kick the poor trembling wretches up, and make them go on by dint of threats and cuffs. It was pitiful the way in which they dragged their trembling limbs along, and kept on repeating the same thing over and over again, as if terror had deprived them of the power of ever making a new remark, "*Sahib*, that old man elephant !"

In this way we tracked up some miles farther, the jungle becoming denser and darker at every yard. So interlaced were the bamboo, rattan, and other trees, that at last we could only travel where the elephant had crushed his way through. There was now no difficulty whatever in tracking him. His course was marked plainly as could be by the trampled brushwood and the marks on the trees, where he had torn off the boughs to munch as he went along. In a short time we were able to depend on our ears for guidance as well as our eyes. We could hear distinctly, amidst the crackling of branches, a deep, rumbling noise, which we knew proceeded from the elephant's hoarse throat, and the flapping of his great ears.

This was too much for the nerves of the *shikaris*, and, in spite of threats, and entreaties, and cuffs, they vanished from the scene with wonderful celerity on the wings of fear. A few yards' farther advance and I suddenly placed my hand on Dalrymple's arm.

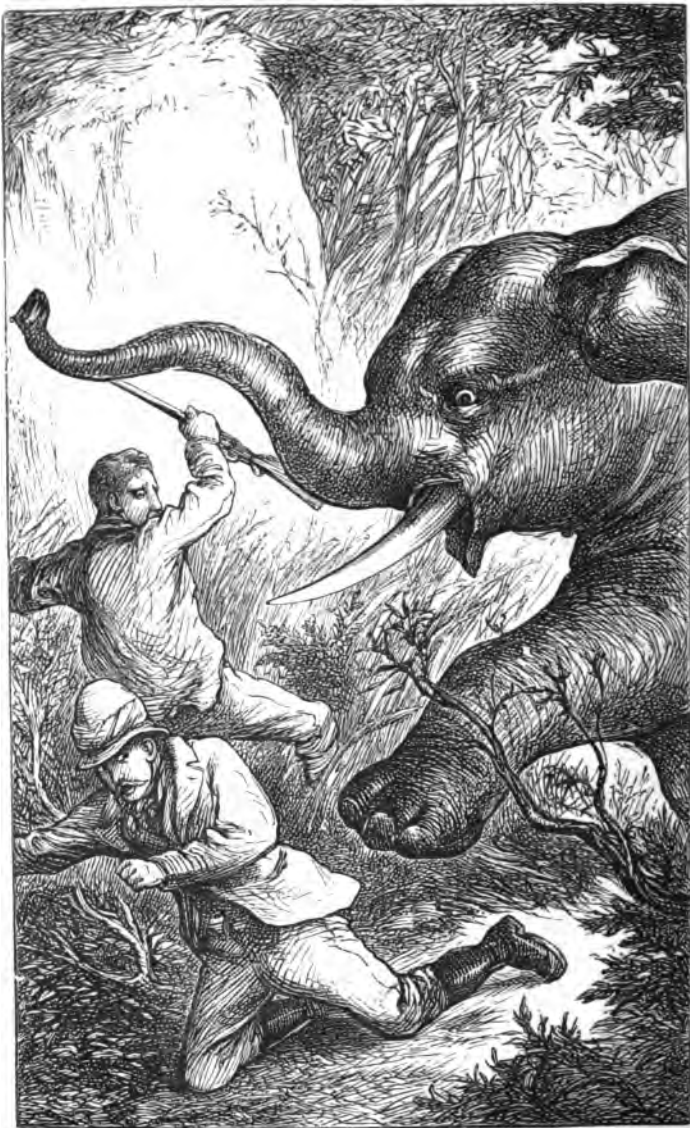
"Dal," I said, in a hoarse whisper, "there he is." And I pointed to a great grey ear we could see wagging through a clump of bamboos not more than ten yards off and above us. Our presence was evidently suspected, for there was a sudden cessation of the rumbling noise, as if the animal were listening intently, and the only thing that broke the silence was the clicking of our hammers, as we full-cocked our rifles.

"*Seniores priores* ; you fire first," whispered Dalrymple.

It was the first time, as I have said before, that either of us had ever had a chance of a shot at an elephant, or we would not have been guilty of such mad folly as to fire uphill at a vicious old rogue.* Bringing my rifle up to my shoulder, I took a steady aim and fired. For a moment or two the smoke hung, and we could see nothing; but, ye gods, what a clamour rent the air! It seemed as if there were as many pipes in that huge throat as there are in an organ, for the fearful din that burst from it embraced all notes, from a deep roar to a shrill scream. Then there was a crash, and the towering form was all but upon us. You may depend upon it, we did not stay long to look, but in that one glimpse I had noticed that the rogue had only one tusk; the other was broken short off, and blood was pouring from him. Dalrymple let fly as the huge face presented a target almost at the muzzle of his rifle, and then we turned and ran as hard as we could for dear life, down an opening to our left—evidently an open elephant path—the brute after us screaming like a railway engine, and with his trunk outstretched to grasp us. Both Dalrymple and myself were naturally fleet of foot, but fear lent a new activity to our limbs, and we surpassed ourselves on that occasion, or we could never have kept beyond the reach of that outstretched trunk. Away we went, the brute thundering after us, and the ground vibrating under the rush of his huge feet. For nearly a hundred yards did we run, and I'll be bound, could we have been timed, that we accomplished that distance in the shortest time on record. I now descried an opening to the left, a little way in advance.

"Let's take that turning, Dal," I panted, thinking that the brute, mad with rage and pain, might continue his onward career, and, at all events, give us breathing time. On reaching the opening we turned sharply round, and, after a few strides, found to our

* A name applied to this class of elephant.



"Dalrymple tried to rise, but the rogue again struck him down with his trunk."— p. 363

dismay, our progress barred by the perpendicular face of a high rock. It was a *cul de sac*! The brute, too, had followed us. Facing about in blank despair, we blazed away our two remaining barrels into the monster, and the next moment another half scream, half roar ringing in our ears, the uplifted trunk swept us both off our feet. Then on our prostrate forms did the rogue try to wreak his vengeance. Twice was the single tusk imbedded in the ground between Dalrymple and myself. Had its companion not been broken off I should not be here to tell the tale. To the fact of the brute having but one tusk I owe my life. Bruised and faint, for that powerful trunk had dashed us to the ground with fearful force, I managed to roll out of the infuriated beast's way, and, feeling as if every bone in my body were broken, I crawled to an adjacent bush. Dalrymple tried to rise, but the rogue again struck him down with his trunk, and then kicked him with his forefeet, as if he had been a foot-ball. It was a fearful sight. Both man and beast were covered with blood, and the grass, and the leaves of the bushes were also bedabbled with it. The elephant now settled himself to kneel on Dalrymple, and, with a shudder, I thought my poor friend's last moment had come, when suddenly a tremor ran through the ponderous frame, and the brute nearly tottered over on his side. For a few moments he staggered about like a drunken man, and then streaming with gore, he reeled off to die in the jungle hard by.

With guns shattered, nerves hardly less so, half dead, bruised, and shaken, Dalrymple and myself managed to drag ourselves back to our tents, and there we lay in our hammocks for a week. At the expiration of that time we returned to Mykalore with the single tusk, and we also took back with us such painful and lasting impressions of that day's work as will always make the very mention, or the very sight of an elephant distasteful to us. Dalrymple and I have always been credited with a fair amount of nerve, and we were both passionately fond of sport, but since that day neither

of us have pulled a trigger. You will all now thoroughly understand, I am sure, why I refused to ride an elephant to-day.

Such was the conclusion of Stewart's Story, which had been listened to with the deepest attention and interest on all sides. At an early stage of the narration Mr. Shillitoe's mouth had opened to its full extent, and in that position it had remained until the close, when it shut up with a snap, as its owner mentally remarked, "No. I shall *not* import one of those brutes into Peckham Rye, after all."

"Dear me, it must have been dreadful," said Mrs. Shillitoe, with a shudder. "It made me positively creep. I'm sure I shall dream all night of an elephant pursuing me with an outstretched trunk, and screaming, as you said, Mr. Stewart, like a railway engine. Do you know, Shillitoe, my love, I really do wish, after having heard that story, that you were not quite so stout a figure. Coming upon you suddenly in the dark one might easily take you for an elephant."

"Don't talk nonsense, Arabella," said old Mr. Shillitoe, rather sharply.

"I'm sure I cannot make out how you had the courage to go after the brute as you did," said Mrs. Shillitoe, addressing Stewart; "I should have given it up at that exciting moment when you discovered the footprints as large as two soup plates."

"Yes," said Mr. Shillitoe, "that part of the narrative reminded me very much, Arabella, my love, of that day when you stuck in the sands at Margate."

"Don't be ridiculous, Shillitoe," said the lady, with considerable asperity. "Let's change the subject. Haven't *you* any reminiscence or anecdote you could favour us with, Captain Hamilton? Military men lead such a charming life of adventure, that you must have passed through strange scenes."

"I fear my powers as a *raconteur*," said Hamilton, "are very

feeble, compared with Mr. Stewart's, and any story I could tell, coming after his, would be like small beer after imperial tokay."

"Come, Hamilton, my dear fellow," said Stewart, laughing, "none of that, or we shall think that you are guilty of the worst description of pride—that which apes humility. You can tell a story as well as anyone I ever came across; so go on. After having spun my yarn, it's my call, and I call upon you."

"This is capital; just the time for telling stories," said old Mr. Shillitoe, rubbing his hands. "This is what I call a rational, a friendly, and an instructing way of passing an evening in the tropics."

"Yes; but I think a ghost story would be the thing," remarked one of the party. "Those deep shadows under the trees, the fantastic shapes the branches assume in the darkness, and the occasional shriek of the owls, which we might almost fancy was the cry of some departed spirit, would lend a deliciously creeping charm to the horrible tale."

"Oh dear, no, please don't have anything of that sort," said Mrs. Shillitoe. "I've crept quite enough over that elephant, and if we had a ghost now, between the two I shouldn't sleep a wink all night."

"Well," said Hamilton, "out of deference to your wishes, Mrs. Shillitoe, we'll steer clear of the supernatural. Stewart's adventure with that old rogue elephant is one of the most wonderful escapes I have ever heard of. I'll now tell you of another escape from death, which, though in quite a different way, is equally extraordinary. It's not an event in my own life, but

'I'll tell it to you, as it was to me told,
About a soldier stout and bold.'

The facts I had from the lips of the brother of the officer in question, himself a gallant old soldier of a hundred fights."

HAMILTON'S STORY.*

On the night of the 18th of June, 1815, there lay on the battle-field of Waterloo, amidst the dying and the dead, a certain well-known and justly popular captain of the Rifle Brigade, or the 95th Rifles, as it was then called. With honour and distinction he had passed through the perils and hardships of the Peninsular campaign. His kind, though outspoken bluff nature in quarters, and his conspicuous gallantry on many a hard-fought field, had made his name respected, not alone in his own corps, but also throughout the Light Division in which he had served. But it seemed now as if his gallant and honourable career were at last cut short. A bullet through one of his lungs had laid him low. It was not the first time he had bled for his country, but it seemed beyond doubt that this would be the last. For hours of agony, occasionally broken by moments of partial insensibility, he lay weltering in his blood. He was at length discovered by his own trusty servant, who had come in search of him, a soldier of the name of Small, who hailed from the same county as his master, Yorkshire. At first, Small thought the captain was dead; but finding that he still breathed, he determined upon taking him into Brussels, for, thought the stout Yorkshireman, while there is life there is hope. There were no such things to be had as ambulance-carts, and Small was at his wits' end. Though, since those days, the horrors of war have been much aggravated by the invention of deadlier weapons of carnage, it must be added, as a set-off, that the appliances for alleviating them have also improved. Nothing better for the transport of his wounded master could the faithful Small obtain than a horse of French cuirassiers, which he found wandering masterless about the field of battle, and which he captured. At this juncture, the colour-sergeant of the company, who, like Small, had come out in search of the

* This story, like Stewart's, is no fiction. It is absolutely true.

captain, came up. Between the two, the wounded officer was lifted on to the horse, and, with his two faithful followers, one on each side of the horse holding him on, the party started for Brussels. The agony of that ride defies description. But you can imagine the torture that a man shot through the lungs must have felt at every step the horse took. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have succumbed, but Captain George Simpson came of a race of hardy Yorkshiremen, and his frame was as stout as his heart. The torture, however, was beyond human endurance, and he repeatedly lapsed into insensibility for short periods. At last Brussels was reached, and Small obtained a billet for his master and himself at a banker's house in the suburbs of the town. The surgeon of the regiment, an old friend of Captain Simpson's, was speedily in attendance, only, however, to pronounce the hopelessness of the case. All that he could prescribe was quiet.

"He is beyond the reach of my art," said the surgeon, with a weary sigh and a sad shake of the head, as he contemplated his cheery and gallant old friend. "All we can do for him, Small, is to try our best to let him pass away as peaceably as possible. It's no use bothering him with my nostrums. Let him be kept perfectly quiet, and he'll probably cease to breathe in two or three hours."

So saying, the doctor left hurriedly, for you may be sure there was plenty of work for him that night in Brussels.

The next day, contrary to the doctor's expectation, Captain George Simpson was still alive.

"Extraordinary!" said the doctor. "However, he can't possibly hold out until to-morrow. Keep him quiet, Small, and soothe his last moments as much as you can."

Captain George Simpson, however, in spite of the doctor's positive assertion, did hold out until the morrow.

"This tenacity of life is astounding," said the doctor. "I

always knew George Simpson was a tough fellow, but I didn't expect this of him."

And I don't know that the doctor did not, in his official capacity, feel rather aggrieved, and look upon the fact of Captain George Simpson continuing to live, when it had been medically pronounced utterly impossible that he should do so, as rather a slight on the profession.

"That fellow George always was obstinate," thought the doctor. "As brave as a lion, as tender-hearted as a woman, and as obstinate as a mule. I do believe he heard me tell Small he couldn't live, and it's out of sheer contradiction that he's continuing to do so."

An abscess speedily formed in the perforated lung, and copious suppuration set in.

"There's no doubt about it *this* time," said the doctor. "Now, Small, my good man, the end of your master will be this. The abscess will burst, and suffocation will—*must* immediately ensue. Nothing can avert *that*. Let him, however, be kept perfectly still; don't allow him to stir hand or foot, and his end may possibly be a little quieter in consequence."

So saying, the doctor, after a tender pressure of his friend's hand and a last fond look at him, left for where duty called him to other bedsides.

Faithfully Small stuck to his master. The night passed away, but Captain George did not. He was still living—only just living. But at about noon the end was unmistakably near. He was evidently sinking fast. Beyond all possibility of a doubt, Death, so often balked of his prey, seemed now to have laid his gaunt hand upon him. Thicker and thicker came the breath, and there was a rattling in the throat as the matter from the abscess accumulated there. Sorrowfully did Small watch the life that was very dear to him ebbing away. Many a Peninsular battle had they fought side by side, in many a bivouac had they roughed

it together, but never again would he hear the word of command from his old master.

It happened to be a glorious evening, and the bright rays of sunshine were struggling through the jalousies into the sick room. Suddenly a strange flicker of strength animated the exhausted frame, and Small heard his name pronounced in a hoarse whisper.

"Sir," said Small, by the bedside in a moment, and stooping down low to catch the dying behest.

"Oh, Small," said poor Captain George, with a yearning gaze at the bright rays of light dancing on the wall, "take me to see the glorious sun once more."

"I can't do it, sir," said Small; "the doctor said you wasn't to be moved on any account, sir."

"Never mind. Help me to the window, Small. Let me see the glorious sun before I die, and feel once more the sweet breath of heaven. Help me, Small."

"Can't be done, sir," said Small, gulping down his feelings. "I'd be tried by court-marshal, for disobedience of orders. Now don't—don't go talking so, sir. The doctor said you was to be kept quite quiet."

"I don't care what the doctor says, Small," said Captain George Simpson, with just a flash of his old pugnacity in his tone, "I *shall* see the glorious sun before I die. There's a yearning in my heart, before it is stilled for ever, to gaze on the warm, the bright, the glorious sun. Come, Small, help me to the window."

"Out of the question, sir," said Small, not daring to meet his master's yearning look. "Oh, dear! oh, dear!" he soliloquised, "I'd sooner fight the battle of Waterloo over again, than to have to go on refusing him like this." And Small walked away to the window, so as to get further out of range.

"Small!" again came from the sick bed.

"Well, sir?" said Small, approaching, and trying to harden his heart to his master's entreaties.

"Will you refuse a dying man's last request? Help me to the window, Small. Do for your old master the last thing he'll ever ask you."

This appeal was too much for Small's feelings.

"To think of him, now—one of the strongest men in the regiment—having to ask, just like a little babby, to be taken across a room!" was what crossed Small's mind and he wavered.

"Help me, that's a good fellow, Small. It's not much for a dying man to ask—just to be taken to a window, to look at the sun once more."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! I can't stand this no longer," said Small, fairly giving way. "Bless your heart, sir, I don't care what the doctor says. I can't refuse you."

"That's a good fellow, Small," said Captain George, with a grateful look in his dim eyes.

In a few moments Small, who was the reverse of his name, both in stature and heart, had carried his master to the window, which was a French one, opening down to the floor, from which three stone steps led into a garden.

"There, Small, set me on my legs for a moment or two, and I can hold on here. Now open the window."

The order was obeyed, and Captain George Simpson's wish was gratified. He was gazing on the glorious sun once more, with the breath of heaven fanning his brow, clammy with the cold sweat of weakness. Notwithstanding the agony of his wounds, a peaceful smile played over his countenance as he stood bathed in the warm light of the bright sunshine.

"Ah!" he murmured, taking a long breath, as if he were drinking in the very rays. For a moment or two he remained like one entranced; but the fresh air, in his weak condition, was too powerful for him, and, without a cry, or a word of warning,

he fell prone forward with a crash, down the stone steps, and there he lay like a log.

Terrified out of his senses, Small never attempted to raise him up, but rushed off for medical assistance. On his return with the doctor half an hour afterwards, they found Captain George in the same position—feet on the top steps, and face downwards on the gravel walk.

He was speedily raised, and the doctor found that, although inanimate as a log, he still breathed; and, what was still more astounding, breathed more regularly and clearly than he had done since first wounded. The shock of the fall, it appears, had caused the abscess to burst, and his lying insensible and motionless for so long a time, with his face downwards, had assisted the discharge to flow freely. Of course he was at once carried to his bed, where he lay insensible, with his face cut and covered with blood, the effects of the fall.

"Are there any hopes, sir?" asked Small, as the doctor dressed the wound.

"Hopes? Yes, I should think there were. Nothing will kill your master, Small. I've come to that conclusion. He's just gone and done about the only thing that could have saved him, though I'm sure no doctor would have prescribed the remedy. That header of his down those steps will be his salvation, I believe."

The doctor was right. Captain George Simpson served his sovereign and his country for many years after the battle of Waterloo, and lived to a ripe old age.

"Bravo!" cried old Mr. Shillitoe, heartily, as Hamilton brought his story to its very satisfactory conclusion. "Upon my word, that was a right gallant and tough old soldier. That's the stuff our English heroes are made of."

All the members of the party were quite as pleased with

Hamilton's story as Mr. Shillitoe was, and many personal adventures were related, until the lateness of the hour and a snore from Mrs. Shillitoe warned them that it was time to go to bed.

"Good night, gentlemen ; good night. Bless you, bless you all. I have spent the most delightful evening that has ever fallen to my lot," said Mr. Shillitoe, as he shook hands, with extreme fervour, all round.

"And so have I," said Mrs. Shillitoe. "We shall carry back with us to our suburban residence a grateful and charming recollection of this evening's entertainment."

CONCLUSION.

THE story of "Our Travellers' Bungalow" should close with the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe from India, which took place about a fortnight after the evening described in the last chapter ; but I cannot, as a conscientious historian, leave the reader perplexed and anxious as to the result of the journey, the object of which, be it remembered, was the dethronement of the Tompkinses. I am happy to be able to state that this glorious object has been attained with brilliant success. The once rival houses of Shillitoe and Tompkins are no longer so. For there to be rivalry there must be equality, or an approach to it. But there is none whatever in this case. The Tompkinses are simply nowhere now. They are "not in it." Their Nile, as Mr. Shillitoe himself forcibly put it, has been completely "choked up" by his India. On his return, Mr. Shillitoe lost no time in striking the blow which was to bring the usurping Tompkinses toppling down from their eminence. He delivered a lecture at Peckham Rye, on India, or rather, as Mr. Shillitoe's handbills expressed it, "On the

Gorgeous East ; or, the Brightest Jewel in the British Crown." As there was no charge for entrance, and refreshments were provided gratis, the lecture drew a crowded and enthusiastic house. Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe received quite an ovation, and from that moment the Tompkinses' reign was over. They have, however, I am glad to say, accepted their defeat with cheerful resignation ; while the Shillitoes, I am equally glad to say, behave to their vanquished foes with that generosity which is held to be the most beautiful virtue in conquerors.

A short time ago I visited the Shillitoes. Stantoebuscookcam Lodge is worth seeing. It is crammed with Indian curiosities. In the hall are numerous tigers' skins, and when people ask Mr. Shillitoe whether they are mementoes of his prowess with the gun, he falls to the discussion of the weather or politics. On the walls are numerous pictures by eminent artists, depicting the doings of the worthy couple in the gorgeous East. The subject of one very fine canvas is, as stated in red letters on the gilt frame : " Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe, of Stantoebuscookcam Lodge, and party, riding on elephants, the property of His Royal Highness the Rajah of Mysore." Mrs. Shillitoe, in her very natural pride, was for having the picture life size, but Mr. Shillitoe, with some reason pointed out that an elephant was rather too large an animal for that sort of treatment. Upon which Mrs. Shillitoe consoled herself with an instruction to the artist to " make it as big as he could." Another of these historical paintings represents " Mrs. Shillitoe inscribing her name on the Great Pyramid." Altogether the Shillitoes have not hidden the light of their Indian journey under a bushel, and the relish with which they talk over their adventures in that country will last them the remainder of their lives. Besides these paintings and curiosities, and works of art, an additional ray of oriental splendour is imparted to the establishment by Ramchullundur Samingo. This faithful retainer, sleeker than ever, and in his picturesque garb, is much admired. When

Mr. and Mrs. Shillitoe take their drives abroad, Ramchullundur Samingo sits on the box beside the coachman, and is frequently cheered by the youth of Peckham Rye.

All this state and circumstance have earned for Mr. Shillitoe the proud sobriquet of "The Maharajah," while Mrs. Shillitoe is known as "The Begum."

Last season the illustrious pair celebrated their golden wedding—the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage—by a magnificent entertainment at Stantoebuscookcam Lodge. It took the brilliant and fashionable form of a Fancy Dress Ball, at which Mr. Shillitoe appeared gorgeously attired as the Great Mogul, while Mrs. Shillitoe dazzled her guests by the resplendence of her attire as a Maharanee. During the evening there was one *contre-temps* which might have led to serious disaster. The feathers on the Maharanee's turban rose to such a height, that while the lady was standing majestically in the middle of her reception room, they ignited at the chandelier above, and in a moment a very, brilliant display of fireworks was going on. For some time the scene was such as to baffle description. In the general anxiety to extinguish the conflagration, the majestic Maharanee was banged and battered over the head with anything people could get hold of, and finally her head was put into a bag until she went out. The confusion was intense. Several ladies fainted, but burnt feathers are a capital remedy for that complaint, and as there were plenty of them, nothing very serious happened, and within a quarter of an hour the Maharanee reappeared in another turban to restore tranquility and enjoyment among the guests.

On the other hand, Mr. Shillitoe acquitted himself very well as the Great Mogul. "He looked the character every inch," was the remark of an old lady who took the title Great in its physical sense, the inches she referred to being those of girth rather than of height. Certainly there was one little *faux pas* on the part of the Great Mogul which I must relate. In hastening forward to

welcome the principal guest of the evening, Mr. Alderman Bulgey, he tripped over his jewelled sabre, and instead of giving his hand, dashed his bald head with considerable impetus into the aldermanic waistcoat.

The picturesque grounds of Stantoebuscookcam Lodge were brilliantly illuminated on the occasion, and to add to the effect, an elephant hired from a menagerie promenaded about the walks, under the charge of his keeper, got up as a *mahout*.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend the reader to pay Stantoebuscookcam Lodge a visit some day. He will require no other introduction than the simple statement that the fame of the inmates as Indian travellers had reached his ears, and he was anxious to behold them. This will be quite enough. You will be received with open arms. Ramchullundur Samingo will be summoned, and most hospitable injunctions will be given him concerning you in Mr. Shillitoe's flowery style, to hear which is of itself quite worth a journey to Peckham Rye.

THE END.

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